



What is the difference between cleaning, sanitising and disinfecting?

With the current Coronavirus pandemic, cleaning has never been so important and under the spotlight. However, with this comes confusion as to what 'cleaning' actually is and if its meaning will significantly change for the future.

Previously, if it 'looked' and 'smelt' clean it was presumed that it was clean, but an increased interest in hygiene has led to an improved awareness of what "clean" actually means.

More frequently than ever before, the words "sanitising" and "disinfecting" are being used interchangeably, but what is the difference? It may affect how you use these products in your cleaning routine.

What needs to be made clear is that cleaning is just as important as disinfecting.

Cleaning with soap and water means surfaces are free of loose dirt and particles.

Thorough cleaning is needed before disinfecting or sanitising an area, so these particles do not lower the effectiveness of the process. This two-step process takes significant time but is necessary for efficiency.

Cleaning alone will always be seen as positive because allergens and microorganisms are being removed from the surfaces of the indoor environment. However, there is the risk of further contamination as this simply removes debris.

To then sanitise after cleaning means you are reducing the bacteria and contamination to a safe level.

This lowers the level of germs you are exposed to, whereas disinfection kills everything on the surface.

Disinfection is generally more effective than sanitising as it utilises chemicals to kill all bacteria and germs.

When is best to use sanitiser?

Sanitiser is best used in areas at lower risk of bacteria as it 99.9% effective in killing bacteria. Sanitisers are used on less frequent contact points and are also recommended for use in food preparation areas, on food tools and on objects used by children, as they are less aggressive than disinfectants.

When is best to use disinfectant?

Disinfectant is best used for deep cleaning, with the modern standard for disinfectant being 99.9999% efficiency against bacteria. It should be used in areas at high risk of contamination such as toilets, basins and sinks.

If you already have a regular cleaning regime, sanitising in conjunction with cleaning will work well. If a stronger product is required, it is wise to consider a disinfectant. If you are in any doubt, please refer back to the manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet for specific directions of use.