

FAQS ABOUT CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Q: Can coronavirus droplets survive on clothing?

- The World Health Organization remains uncertain about how long the coronavirus lives on surfaces, but initial testing indicates that it may survive on surfaces for a few hours or up to a few days.
- However, scientists at Harvard found that the virus is more likely to survive on hard services, like plastic and steel, than on softer ones like clothing fabric. Still, experts suggest that you remove your shoes and change out of your work clothes to prevent outside germs from coming into your home.

Q: To combat the virus, what's the best practice for doing laundry?

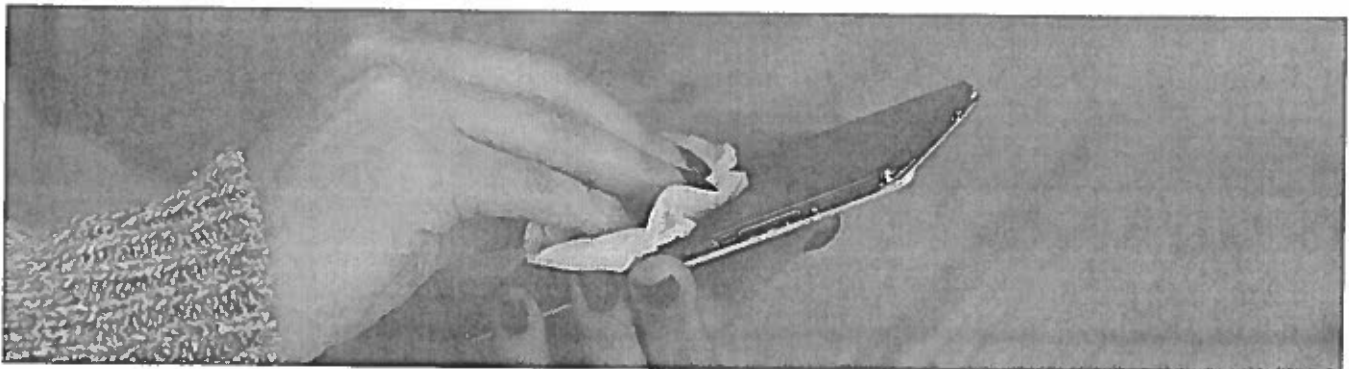
- The CDC recommends washing your own clothes using the warmest appropriate water setting, making sure to dry them completely. They also suggest cleaning and disinfecting clothes hampers. Better yet, if possible, use a disposable bag to line the hamper.
- When you are on the job, follow standard precautions for handling your client's laundry. Wear disposable gloves. To reduce the chances of spreading the virus through the air, never shake dirty laundry. Be sure to remove your gloves properly (to avoid exposure to germs) and throw them out after each use. Then wash your hands.

Q: Does it matter what type of soap I use to wash my hands?

- Fortunately, no, the type of soap does not matter. And, remember, since COVID-19 is a virus, there is no advantage to using antibacterial hand soap. The most important thing is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds so that the combination of the soap and the friction of your hands rubbing together disrupts the germs.

Q: I always have my cell phone with me when I care for clients. Do I need to clean it?

- Yes, experts recommend that you clean your cell phone regularly. Since you can't use soap and water on a phone, they recommend something like a Clorox or ethanol wipe—something with at least 70% alcohol. Be sure to clean the back and sides as well...but avoid the ports.
- However, DO NOT use a wipe that contains bleach as it may ruin the surface of your phone. If you are unable to find wipes, try filling a spray bottle with rubbing alcohol. Spray the phone carefully, avoiding getting any liquid in the ports. Whatever cleaner you use, just make sure it has time to sit and work its magic before you wipe it off with a single use cloth.
- **NOTE:** Your best bet to protect your phone from harsh cleaners may be to first put a screen protector on your screen.



MORE FAQs ABOUT CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Q: Is there a difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

- Yes! Cleaning *removes* germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces, lessening the risk of spreading infection by reducing the number of germs. However, cleaning does not kill germs.

Disinfecting involves using chemicals to *kill* germs on surfaces.

Your best bet to lower infection spread is to first clean a surface and then follow up by disinfecting it.

For clients who are isolating at home (and in your own home), the CDC suggests cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas. These items include counters, tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles (such as the refrigerator and microwave handles), desks, toilets, and sinks.



Q: What products can I use to disinfect surfaces in my clients' homes (or my own home)?

- First, remember your standard precautions. Wear gloves while cleaning and disinfecting client areas. When you are finished, remove them properly, dispose of them, and wash your hands. NOTE: At home, if you don't have gloves, be sure to wash your hands before *and* after you clean.

If surfaces are dirty, CLEAN them first by scrubbing with soap/detergent and water. Then, if possible, DISINFECT. You can use a diluted bleach solution, an alcohol solution with at least 70% alcohol or one of these CDC-approved disinfectants:

www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf (In general, look for sprays or wipes that promise to kill 99.9 percent of germs.) Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions on the container.

You can prepare a bleach solution by mixing 4 teaspoons of bleach to one quart of water. However, please remember to:

- Check the expiration date on the bottle of bleach. If it has expired, it will not be effective against the coronavirus.
- Ask your client or a family member if any household surface will be harmed by bleach. For example, some laminate countertops will discolor if cleaned with bleach.
- Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser, including vinegar. It may create a poisonous gas.
- Be sure to label the bleach solution container and keep it away from children and adults with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

MANAGING ANXIETY AND FEAR OVER COVID-19

The COVID-19 scare has many people on edge. And all of its effects on society, such as schools closing, the stock market crash, and declared states of emergency can cause extreme anxiety.

Non-stop coverage in the media, misinformation on social media, and the general uncertainty of where all this is going can make matters worse.

- **Experts advise that anxiety is a normal, protective human response.** It's when your brain scans your body and the environment for potential threats so that you can get prepared to react, if necessary.

The problem is that stress and anxiety can easily spiral into panic. Panic is NOT productive.

- ***For people who already suffer from anxiety, the loudest message coming through is that everyone is powerless to an invisible threat that has the potential to devastate individuals, families, and even entire communities.*** This fear can lead to irrational behaviors such as fixating on handwashing or wearing a mask when it's not necessary to do so.
- ***On the other side of the spectrum, there are those who refuse to see the virus as a threat at all.*** They may block it out completely, downplay the risk, and even ignore basic advice to wash hands and avoid public gatherings.
- **Both of these are stress-related responses. And neither is productive.** Problems can arise when stress spirals out of control and leaves a person to obsess over protective measures—or ignore them altogether.

The healthiest response lies somewhere in the middle of these two extremes!

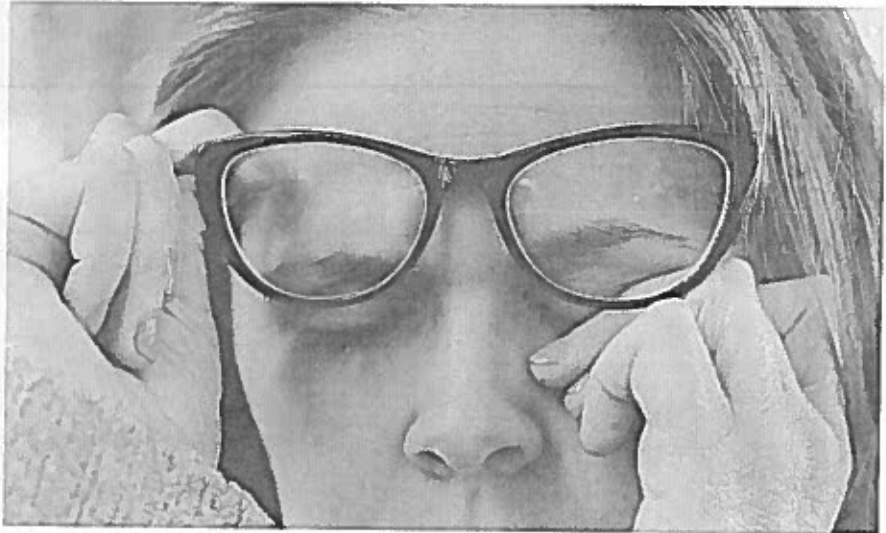


If you, or someone you know seems to suffer from one of these stress responses, here are five easy steps that can help keep stress and anxiety at a healthy level:

1. **Try to stay “in the moment.”** Anxiety can spiral out of control when your mind begins to predict catastrophic future events. Just know that all you can do is take measure to protect yourself from what is happening right now. You can't predict the future.
2. **Stay informed but know when to turn off the news (and log out of social media).** It's important to stay up-to-date and know the facts. You should tune in for that. But there's a point at which news and social media stop being helpful. You could spend hours listening to headlines or scrolling tweets for alerts, but none of that makes you any safer.
3. **Get prepared.** Don't feel silly, weak, or embarrassed to follow reasonable safety advice from trusted sources. In fact, feeling prepared can give you a sense of control, which can also decrease anxiety.
4. **Practice self-care.** Get a good night's sleep. Eat a balanced diet. And get a little bit of exercise each day. These things help boost your immune system and can help decrease anxiety as well.
5. **Reach out for help if you need it.** There is no shame in reaching out to a friend, family member, your doctor, or even a mental health expert if you feel your anxiety spiraling out of control. **Help is available. You are not alone.**



STOP TOUCHING YOUR FACE!



Research shows that most of us touch our faces at least 16 times a day.

WHY IS THAT A PROBLEM?

Under normal circumstances, it wouldn't be that big of a deal to touch your face 16 times a day. But we are NOT living under normal circumstances right now!

Think of your face as the onramp to your body. The mucous membranes on your face (eyes, nose, and mouth) are super-highways to your respiratory system. So, if the virus is on your hand when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth (even once), it will surely hitch a ride to your lungs and make you sick. It's that simple.

IT'S A HARD HABIT TO BREAK.

Most of us touch our faces throughout the day without even realizing it. We rub our tired eyes, itch our tickly noses, and bite off ragged fingernails without much thought at all. So, how do you break a habit that you are hardly aware you even do?

Here are a few tips you can use:

- **Wash your hands with soap and water often throughout the day.** But keep in mind, this is not the ONLY solution. It's nearly impossible to keep your hands completely germ-free. As soon as you wash your hands, you will likely re-contaminate them by touching surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, or light switches that may hold the virus.
- **Pay close attention to your urge to touch your face.** Becoming more aware of the habit can help you catch yourself before you do it.
- **Use pleasant scents to remind you.** Rub a pleasant smelling lotion on your hands after washing them. When you bring your hand to your face, the scent will bring your awareness to what you are about to do.
- **Tie a string around your finger.** Remember the old trick of tying a string around your finger to help you remember something? It can help you break your face touching habit too. It doesn't have to be a string. You could put a rubber band on your wrist, wear a different ring, or even draw a heart on the back of your hand to remind you! Do whatever works for you.
- **Use a clean tissue.** If you just can't fight the urge to scratch your itchy nose, grab a tissue to use as a barrier.
- **Take extreme measures!** If you find yourself touching your face while sitting at your desk, turn on the ["Do Not Touch Your Face Webcam."](#) The site will alert you when you are about to touch your face!