**Cleaning vs. sanitizing vs. disinfecting**

Is there a difference?  
*Hint: Yes, there is.*

**Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process *does not necessarily kill germs*, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

**Sanitizing** lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

**Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using *chemicals to kill germs* on surfaces or objects.* This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

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Prioritize frequently touched surfaces and find more information on proper hand and surface cleaning at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)