

Identifying a Disinfectant Effective Against the Virus that Causes COVID-19

Background

For a disinfectant to be effective, it must remain visibly wet on a surface for a specific length of time (the **contact time**). The required contact time depends on the virus you want to kill and the product you are using. Some disinfectants (i.e., concentrates) must be **diluted** before use.

The label of a disinfectant product will list the organisms the disinfectant will kill when used according to label directions. A disinfectant must be tested for efficacy against an organism before it can list that organism on its label. There are currently no disinfectants that specifically list SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, on their label, though this may change in the future. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified products that are effective against similar or harder-to-kill viruses, and are therefore believed to be effective against SARS-CoV-2. Many of these products are registered for sale and distribution in Oregon, and each of them may be marketed under many trade names by several companies. For ease, the term “COVID-19” will be used in this document instead of SARS-CoV-2.

Selecting and applying disinfectant

Before you purchase and/or use a disinfectant with the intention of killing COVID-19, you should confirm that it is thought to be effective against COVID-19 and is registered for sale and distribution in Oregon. When using the product on a surface, you must ensure the surface remains visibly wet for the appropriate contact time. Otherwise, the product may not be effective.

1. To determine if a specific disinfectant is believed to be effective against COVID-19
 - A. Locate the EPA Registration Number on the pesticide label. This is often found at the beginning or end of the label. Look for “EPA Reg. No.” followed by two or three sets of numbers.¹
 - B. Go to EPA’s List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (<https://oda.fyi/EPADisinfectantListN>) and search the first two sets of numbers. If the EPA Reg. No. is on this list, the product is thought by EPA to be effective against COVID-19 when used correctly.²
2. To determine if the disinfectant under consideration is registered in Oregon

Go to ODA’s pesticide product database (http://oda.state.or.us/dbs/pest_productsL2K/search.lasso), and search for the full EPA Reg. No. (which will have two or three sets of numbers). If the search results return the product name and the company/manufacturer on the label, and the product has a status of “Registered” or “Renewal Pending,” it is typically considered registered in Oregon.

¹For example, if EPA Reg. No. 12345-12 is on List N, you can buy EPA Reg. No. 12345-12-2567 and know you’re getting an equivalent product. Follow the contact time provided on List N.

²If the EPA Reg. No. is NOT present on this list: EPA is continually identifying more products they believe to be effective against SARS-CoV2; check List N regularly for additions.

3. To determine the contact time and other use requirements

Refer to List N to determine a disinfectant's contact time. When using the product, ensure that the surface remains visibly wet for that amount of time. Follow all other disinfection (not sanitization) instructions on the label when using the product.

Read the label to identify the allowed surfaces and use sites, and whether you must clean the surface before disinfecting it. If required by the label, dilute the product before use. Wear the personal protective equipment (e.g., specific type of gloves) specified on the label. Never use disinfectants on people or animals.

To learn which products are on List N, and for additional information about these products, go to "List N Tool: COVID-19 Disinfectants" click "Launch" and then "Browse All" (<https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>).

If you are unsure about how to properly apply a product, contact the manufacturer or email the Oregon Department of Agriculture Pesticides Program at pestx@oda.state.or.us. If you are unsure whether a specific product is registered in Oregon or on List N, please email pestx@oda.state.or.us. In your email, please include the product name and EPA Reg. No. along with your question. This email is for disinfectant inquiries, not general COVID-19 inquiries.