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# Aerosols And Wipes Eliminate Cross-Contamination Concerns

By Cynthia Kincaid  
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Using aerosols and wipes helps in the fight against cross-contamination. Unlike rags that spread bacteria from room to room, aerosols can be sprayed on a surface and/or cleaned with a wipe that gets tossed away.

"You might use a disinfectant wipe for all the high touch areas of a nursing home, and you can throw the wipe away without causing any transfer of infection," says Patrick L. Kincaid, director of sales for [Allied Eagle Supply](#) in Detroit. "With a wipe, you have the option to use it at a pre-determined interval. With a rag, you might have a tendency to try to stretch it."

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Leon Fields, sales manager for Valley Janitor Supply, says that the disinfectant wipe tests that have been conducted showing heightened effectiveness when a rag is used over again.

"We go into so many school districts and we don't see cross-contamination from classroom to classroom. We're pushing wipes quite heavily," he says.

According to a recent study conducted by the [School of Health and Life Sciences at Cardiff University](#), in Wales, disinfectant wipes outperformed disinfectant sprayed on a rag. The study also concluded that each wipe should be used on a single surface to avoid cross-

contamination.

Wipes and aerosols can also be an important component in sanitizing and disinfecting, but they must be used properly.

"People that just spray disinfectant tend to think that the disinfectant is going to do the job for them. They don't have to do any wiping or rubbing," says Darrel Hicks, author of ["Infection Prevention for Dummies"](#). "Keep in mind that we need to wipe after using an aerosol; we need to get the surface dry with it."

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Sanitizing vs. Disinfecting

Kill claims center on a difference between sanitizing and disinfecting. According to “In For Dummies,” sanitizing removes, but not necessarily eliminates unwanted bacteria and is considered a safe level, which is usually determined by federal and state agencies, which destroys or irreversibly inactivates infectious bacteria.

“Disinfecting usually requires more dwell time, and keeping the surface wet, which can take minutes,” says Bill McGarvey, director of training and sustainability for Warminster, Pa. [Rosenau Co., Inc.](#) “So we need to make sure the surface stays wet to make the kill claim on the label.”

Hicks notes that officially the [U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) says a surface remains wet for at least three minutes that is sufficient dwell time, regardless of the claim, says.

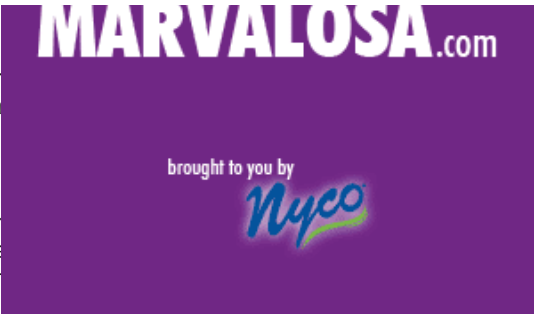
“The EPA, however, maintains if the label says 10 minutes, then the surface should remain wet for 10 minutes,” he says. “But sometimes we don’t have the luxury of rewetting a surface through wet 10 minutes. These test are done in labs, and we are in the real world, so there’s a difference between the lab and the world of housekeeping.”

McGarvey agrees that it may, indeed, be harder for jan/san technicians to disinfect many surfaces and environments by trying to adhere to kill claim labels, but that doesn’t mean surfaces can’t be thoroughly sanitized. And in many cases, an aerosol and wipe combination is the perfect solution.

“It can be hard to keep a doorknob wet for 10 minutes,” he says. “But you can hit that doorknob with an aerosol and wipe, which is a good one-two punch.”

Aerosols and wipes are an effective, safe, and convenient way to clean, and all jan/san professionals might want to take a look at using them as a powerful addition to any cleaning program.

Cynthia Kincaid is a freelance writer based in Columbus, Ohio.



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