Disinfection Chart

This chart is not intended to be inclusive of all approved high-, intermediate- and low-level disinfectants*. It is to be used as a guide when using disinfectants. Other disinfectants can be used. Refer to the Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings for more information as well as specifics on when and how to use disinfectants.

Level of Disinfection	When to Use	Disinfectant Active Ingredients	Contact Times (Approximate)
High-level Destroys or irreversibly inactivates all microbial pathogens (bacteria, fungi, and viruses), but not necessarily large numbers of bacterial spores	Use on semi-critical equipment, instruments, and items that contact mucous membranes or non-intact skin during use but do not ordinarily penetrate the skin or enter sterile tissue (e.g., tweezers used to expose and remove ingrown hairs). Use on items that accidentally penetrate the skin and/or come into contact with blood/body fluids (e.g., scissors that accidentally cut someone while cutting hair). Use on items that hold, manipulate, or contact critical items. Use to disinfect contaminated surfaces following a spill of blood/body fluids.	1:10 chlorine bleach solution** (1 part bleach and 9 parts water); 5,000 parts per million	10 minutes
		≥6% hydrogen peroxide (enhanced action formulation)	20–30 minutes (follow manufacturer's instructions)
		2% hydrogen peroxide (enhanced action formulation)	5–8 minutes (follow manufacturer's instructions)
		0.55% ortho-phthalaldehyde	10 minutes (follow manufacturer's instructions)
Intermediate-level Destroys vegetative bacteria, mycobacteria, most viruses, and most fungi, but not bacterial spores	Use on non-critical equipment, instruments, and items that are intended to contact only intact skin, but may accidentally come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes, or penetrate the skin (e.g., nail clippers or cuticle nippers, as these may accidentally penetrate the skin).	1:50 chlorine bleach solution** (1 part bleach and 49 parts water); 1,000 parts per million	10 minutes
		70–90% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol	10 minutes
		0.5% hydrogen peroxide (enhanced action formulation) with efficacy claims against tuberculosis (TB) or mycobacteria	3-5 minutes (follow manufacturer's instructions)
Low-level Destroys vegetative bacteria and some fungi and viruses, but not mycobacteria or spores	Use on non-critical equipment, instruments, and items that do not directly contact the client, or that contact only hair or intact skin (e.g., hair cutting scissors).	1:500 chlorine bleach solution** (1 part bleach and 499 parts water); 100 parts per million	10 minutes
		Quaternary ammonium	10 minutes (follow manufacturer's instructions)
		3% hydrogen peroxide	10 minutes
		0.5% hydrogen peroxide (enhanced action formulation)	Follow manufacturer's instructions
		Phenols	Follow manufacturer's instructions

* Please adhere to manufacturer's instructions for use; some disinfectants may require rinsing after use.
** Based on bleach solution of 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution (50,000 parts per million available chlorine).