



Disinfectants

HOW CAN CHEMICALS IN DISINFECTANTS GET INTO YOUR BODY?

Skin and Eye Contact

- Some chemicals may harm your skin directly and/or be absorbed into your bloodstream.
- You may splash chemicals into your eyes.
- You may accidentally touch your eyes with chemicals on your hands.
- Chemical vapors in the air may get into your eyes.

Breathing

- You may breathe in chemical vapors through your nose or mouth.

Swallowing

- Chemicals on your hands or in the air may contaminate your food or drink.

HOW CAN CHEMICALS IN DISINFECTANTS AFFECT YOUR BODY?

Different chemicals affect your body in different ways, depending on the *amount* of the chemical in the product, how *harmful* it is, the *length of time* you are exposed, and other factors. Not every person has the same reaction to a chemical. Some people experience health effects when they work with a product, others never do. Health problems that may be caused by chemicals in disinfectants include:

Central nervous system effects: Headache, nausea.

Skin irritation and dermatitis: Redness, itching, skin rash, or dry skin.

Eye irritation, eye damage, and blindness: Redness, burning, watering, itching, loss of sight.

Nose and throat irritation: Runny nose, scratchy throat, burning, itching.

Lung irritation: Breathing difficulty, shortness of breath, coughing.

Reproductive problems: Birth defects.

What harmful chemicals are sometimes found in disinfectants?

WARNING! EXPOSURE TO THESE CHEMICALS MAY CAUSE:

2-butoxyethanol or ethylene glycol monobutyl ether:

Headaches, eye and nose irritation, reproductive problems, birth defects.

Bleach: Eye irritation, skin irritation, breathing problems.

Quaternary ammonium compounds or dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride:

Skin irritation, nose irritation, asthma.

Phenol: Respiratory irritation, headaches, burning eyes, skin burns, liver damage, muscle tremors and loss of coordination.

Glutaraldehyde: Lung, eye, nose and throat irritation, asthma, dermatitis.

Not all disinfectants contain these chemicals, and some may contain harmful chemicals not listed above. Always check the product's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for more information.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CHEMICAL HAZARDS?

The California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology requires that all non-electrical tools be disinfected with an EPA registered disinfectant with demonstrated bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal activity; therefore, when you work around chemical disinfectants, it is important to take steps to protect your health.

Use safe work practices

- Keep containers closed when you're not using them so the product doesn't spill or get into the air.
- Check that all containers of chemicals are properly labeled of their contents.
- Don't eat or drink in your work area as your food or drink may get contaminated.
- Wash your hands after working with chemicals, even if you wore gloves.
- Remove tools from the disinfectant with tongs.

Ventilate the room

- Always work in a well-ventilated area. If there's no ventilation system, open windows and doors to bring in fresh air from outside.

Use protective equipment

- Wear gloves designed to protect your skin from the particular chemicals you're using.
- Wear safety goggles when mixing chemicals to protect your eyes from splashes.

Know your rights as a worker

- Employers must provide workers with Safety Data Sheets if requested.
- Employers must train workers on the hazards of the chemicals they are working with and how to protect themselves from the hazards.

Report any health problems

- Speak up if you are experiencing symptoms of health effects so your employer can help alleviate the problem and let other employees know.
- Seek advice from your doctor on how serious your issues are and how they should be handled.
- You have the right to report health hazards to Cal/OSHA by filing a complaint.

