

5 Disinfection Myths

Myth 1

Cleaning and disinfecting are the same thing.

Not true. Cleaning uses detergents and surfactants to break up debris on surfaces, but disinfectants kill or inactivate pathogens in various ways, depending upon the disinfectant used. Some penetrate the outer layer of a pathogen's cells, which weakens it. Others act almost like a bomb and blow the cells apart.

Myth 2

All disinfectants are created equal.

Not even close. In the United States and Canada, you'll find more than 8,000 registered disinfectant products for sale, and there are several variations between them.

Myth 3

All disinfectants can be used in the same way.

Among the six most common chemistries used for disinfection, especially in healthcare settings, you'll find vast differences in concentrations, contact times, and personal protection needed for proper usage. In addition, many disinfectants require you to clean a surface first with a product containing detergents before you can use a disinfectant on the surface.

Myth 4

Cleaning and disinfection is not *my* job.

In any medical setting, infection control strategies must be part of everyone's job even if they don't do the cleaning itself. It's an important part of maintaining a safe and functional veterinary facility.

Myth 5

If a disinfectant kills most germs, it must be toxic.

Historically, this was true. In the past 10–15 years, however, companies have been working to bring safer and more environmentally sustainable disinfectants to market.