

Cleaning the Bathroom

The bathroom is used all day long. Water is always present in this room and dampness provides ideal conditions for bacterial growth. Bathrooms need special attention and regular cleaning.

As you clean bathroom surfaces, you want to **avoid spreading germs** from one area to another. You will need an antibacterial spray and a liquid disinfectant along with paper towels, and clean rags. Antibacterial wipes are expensive but they come in handy when cleaning areas like the bathroom.

Start cleaning the bathroom by putting **toilet cleaner in the toilet**.

Carefully squeeze the bottle so the cleaner goes all around the rim and sides of the toilet bowl. Use toilet cleaner with caution and only with permission! It can stain your clothes and burn your eyes if it splashes. Leave the cleaner in the toilet for 5 – 10 minutes while you clean other areas in the bathroom. Then scrub the toilet bowl with a toilet brush. Flush the toilet and rinse the brush in the clear water in the toilet. Put the brush in a holder used only for this purpose. If possible, set the brush and holder outside in the sun to dry.

Spray the outside of the toilet tank with disinfectant and wipe clean with paper towels. Follow the same procedure for the outside of the toilet all the way down to the floor. Discard these towels.

Bathroom sinks should be cleaned frequently. Consider how many times we wash our hands, brush our teeth, and then spit the water into the sink! All family members often use the same sink. If one person is sick, it is easy to spread germs on the faucet handles, so cleanliness is important. During times of illness, the sink should be cleaned daily.

Spray the sink, faucet and handles with a disinfectant cleaner. Rub all the surfaces thoroughly. Rinse with clear water. Dry with paper towels and discard them.

Use a clean paper towel or rag to **clean the countertop**. Spray with disinfectant and wipe with a damp cloth. Rinse the cloth as necessary and wipe the countertop until it is free of dust, hair, and dirt. Dry it for a streak-free shine.

The tub or shower stall should be cleaned weekly or more often if necessary. No one wants to take a bath in a tub with a dirty ring left from someone else! Scouring powder is very effective but because it is abrasive, it may scratch the tub or tile. Over time, that will dull the finish and make it harder to keep clean. It's best to use it only to remove stubborn dirt or stains.



Disposable toilet wands with cleaner in them are available to clean the toilet. They are more expensive than toilet cleaner and a toilet brush and they may not disinfect as well as liquid toilet cleaners. Read the product labels carefully and be a wise shopper to make the best choice for your family!

Most of the time a tub-and-tile spray or antibacterial spray will clean the tub or shower well. Spray the surface; rub with a rag, and rinse. Most of these cleaners give off a strong smell and should be used only in a well-ventilated area. Keep the spray away from your face and clothes.

Vinegar is also an effective and inexpensive cleaner. It is cheaper to buy a gallon jug of vinegar.

Use about

½ Cup of vinegar in a bucket of water to clean countertops, floors and mirrors. You can use undiluted vinegar to cut through grease and tough grime in the kitchen and the bathroom.

It's a good alternative to chemical cleaners.

Clean mirrors by spraying lightly with glass cleaner and rubbing dry with dry paper towels or a lint-free rag. Do not use hand or bath towels to clean mirrors. They leave lint on the glass and the cleaner may damage the towel.

If there are open shelves in the bathroom or other furniture, **dust** them. The bathroom is one of the dustiest rooms in the house! Toilet paper, tissues, and towels all create lint and dust.

After all the surfaces in the bathroom have been cleaned, **clean the floor**. Sweep or vacuum to remove loose dirt from the floor. Pour the recommended amount of a liquid disinfectant cleaner into a pail of hot water. Read the label of the product you use and follow all directions. Use a sturdy rag or sponge to scrub the floor. Be sure to rinse it in the hot water frequently as you work. Wring it out well so you don't leave puddles on the floor. You may use a mop instead, but it does not clean as thoroughly.

When you are finished, dump the water down the toilet. Rinse the pail at an outdoor hose if possible, otherwise put some water from the tub into the pail and dump that in the toilet also. You do not want to spread germs from the floor to other areas of the bathroom or house.

Hang towels and washcloths over towel bars so they can dry quickly. Bacteria grow on these, too, so it's important they dry as quickly as possible. Launder them frequently.

Liquid hand soap is better than bar soap for washing hands. Germs remain on bar soap and can be spread from one person to another. Be sure to wash your hands when you have finished cleaning.

Now the bathroom should look sparkling clean! We like to look our best and we spend a lot of time in the bathroom bathing and fixing our hair and face. We'll enjoy it more if we keep the bathroom looking nice, too.

Safety Reminder: Always ask an adult before using cleaning products and follow their directions. Keep all cleaning products out of the reach of young children. **Bleach** is a very effective disinfectant and cleaner, but it is a powerful chemical that can harm you and your clothes. Only use it with adult supervision and permission. **Ammonia** is another strong cleaner that should be used only with adult permission. **Never** mix ammonia and bleach or products that contain these: this creates a very harmful gas!