

# Rethink Disinfecting Wipes in Classrooms

## Safer Alternatives for Your Classroom Supplies List

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Even though they're convenient, **disinfecting wipes are not safe for classroom use**. These wipes contain disinfectants, which are registered pesticides that can harm health. Use safer cleaning products in your classroom instead of disinfecting wipes.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [Envision@vermont.gov](mailto:Envision@vermont.gov).

### Disinfectant wipes contain chemicals that are harmful



- Disinfecting wipes (for example, Lysol and Clorox brands) contain harsh chemicals that have been linked to health issues.
- Touching and breathing in disinfectants can cause eye, skin and respiratory irritation.
- The fragrances and ingredients in disinfecting wipes can trigger allergic reactions, may disrupt hormones and harm reproduction, and can **cause or worsen asthma**.
  - Roughly 9,000 children in Vermont have asthma, and 1 in 3 missed at least one day of school due to their asthma.
  - Reducing exposure to harmful chemicals that trigger asthma can reduce the rate of absenteeism and keep kids in your classroom

### Most of the time, you only need to clean



- **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt and debris from surfaces.
- You don't need fancy cleaners. Regular **soap and water** or a fragrance-free all-purpose cleaner can effectively remove most germs.
- You can keep your classroom clean and safe by:
  - Asking custodial staff for a spray bottle of soap and water or an approved all-purpose cleaner for your classroom. Approved cleaners, like those certified by [Safer Choice](#) or [Green Seal](#), are safer for health and the environment.
  - Requesting fragrance-free baby wipes, paper towels or microfiber cloths on your classroom supplies list.

## Ask custodial staff to disinfect when needed



- Disinfectants (including disinfecting wipes) are registered pesticides. They should only be used according to their labels and **should not be used around children.**
- Only certain areas require the use of disinfectants. Objects and surfaces should be disinfected when there is vomit or feces, or when it is required by law.
- School custodial staff are trained in the proper use and handling of disinfectants.

## Learn more about how to create a safer classroom environment

- [Health Department's Healthy Schools page](#) – Explore guidance for keeping your school environment healthy.
- [Health Department's Cleaning Safely in Schools page](#) – Learn why it is important to choose safer products and how to use them safely.
- [Health Department's Asthma page](#) – Explore causes of asthma and how to identify and manage asthma triggers.
- [Washington State Department of Health's School Supply List](#) – Review safer options to include on your school supply lists.