



GROW
Cedar Valley
Business. Community. *Opportunity*

Return-to-Work Guidance for Office Operations



Dear Grow Cedar Valley Staff,

The past few months have shown the strength and resiliency of our organization. You have made sacrifices, created innovative programming, and done a tremendous job navigating through this unprecedented crisis. We want to assure you that our senior leadership puts the health and safety of our employees above all else.

This guide to a multi-phased reopening will provide you with the information, expectations, protocols, and requirements deemed necessary to ensure a safe and productive return-to-work. This framework will be a living document and will be continually updated as we receive more guidance from the State of Iowa and the Black Hawk Country Department of Public Health.

You play a critical role in our organization and our community, and we thank you for your courage and perseverance as we move forward with bringing you back into the office space. If you have any questions about this guide, or any protocol, we encourage you to reach out to any or all of the senior leadership team.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cary Darrah".

Cary Darrah
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandi Sommerfelt".

Sandi Sommerfelt
Vice President of Operations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Skubal".

Lisa Skubal, CEcD
Vice President of Economic Development

Grow Cedar Valley's Timeline of Return-to-Work

This guide is meant to be a starting point for COVID-19 and LSBX construction considerations as we begin to re-open our physical location. Beginning May 1, Governor Reynolds began allowing businesses to reopen in a safe and responsible way. In order to gauge the comfort level, safety and needs of staff, an office wide survey was conducted and results were used to inform Grow Cedar Valley Senior Leadership and Executive Committee.

On June 15, Grow Cedar Valley will begin to re-open in a phased approach. The movement from one phase to another will be determined by GCV Senior Leadership and will follow guidance set by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health. A minimum of one weeks notice will be given to employees before moving to a new phase or implementing changes. The health and safety of our employees is our first priority.

PHASE 1—JUNE 15

- Summer Hours: Friday close at 12:00 pm (May 29—September 4)
- Staff is assigned to teams with designated days to be in/work in physical work space. The days of the week in office will alternate each week. Staff will still have the option to work remotely, but will only be able to go into the office on the days your team is designated.
 - Team A: Cary, Sandi, Bette, Jim, Kim, Melissa, Teri
 - Team B: Lisa, Molly, Will, Aaron, Aubree, Wes
- Grow Cedar Valley will maintain a business casual dress code. More professional attire may be required based on special meetings or customer visits. [Refer to page 13 of Employee Handbook.]
- Staff to enter through back-office door
- Review Screening Questionnaire prior to entering office posted outside back door or available in the [shared drive](#) or [online](#).
- Office will be cleaned prior to returning employees to work.
- All group meetings will be conducted virtually.
- No in-office meetings or board room rentals
- Large conference room is closed
- Medium, small, and work closet will be available to staff ONLY in order to create adequate separation.
- No shared coffee pot
- Frequent surveys sent to staff to gauge employee feelings and feedback on COVID-19, LSBX construction and re-opening.
- Review guide for additional guidance

PHASE 2—TBD

- No board room rentals
- Visitors may enter office by appointment ONLY
- If meeting can be done virtually – this would be preferred
- Staff to enter through back-office door
- Review Screening Questionnaire prior to entering office

Additional Guidance & Information

The individuals listed below will manage COVID- or LSBX construction-related items, communicate to staff, and ensure policies and procedures are being followed as it applies to Grow Cedar Valley.

COVID-19 OFFICE CONTACT

⇒ **Sandi Sommerfelt**
sandi@growcedarvalley.com
319.415.2974

LSBX CONSTRUCTION OFFICE CONTACT

⇒ **Wes James**
wes@growcedarvalley.com
319.430.1473

OFFICE RESOURCES

RETURN-TO-WORK GUIDANCE FOR OFFICE OPERATIONS: <P:\General\Emergency Preparedness\GCV Return-to-Work Guide>

GCV COVID-19 SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE: <P:\General\Forms\GCV STAFF COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire Form.docx>

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ICqmxKP7T0-iG3JLzHURdYL60YTh155FgdVjX7cUUUp1UREtISlhGNDICSTJTMFJSRzdDQ1NRRVhQNY4u>

GCV TEAM CALENDAR: <P:\General\Emergency Preparedness\GCV Team Calendar>

GCV EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN: \\dataserver\Public\General\Emergency Preparedness

GCV MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS: \\Ddataserver\Public\General\Emergency Preparedness\Safety Data Sheets

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PLAN: 1-800-854-1446 or online www.lifebalance.net

<P:\General\Forms\LifeBalance EAP.pdf> or <P:\General\Forms\LifeBalance EAP 2.PDF>

VIRTUAL DOCTOR VISITS: <P:\General\Forms\United Virtual Visits mobile poster.pdf>

<P:\General\Forms\United Virtual Visits poster.pdf>

CLEANING, SANITIZING, DISINFECTING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? (ARTICLE) <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/blog/3208/cleaning-sanitizing-disinfecting.html>

LOCAL RESOURCES

BLACK HAWK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH: <https://www.co.black-hawk.ia.us/258/Health-Department>

STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES

COVID-19 IN IOWA DASHBOARD: <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/>

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH: <https://idph.iowa.gov/>

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-reponse.html

OSHA: www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

THE WHITE HOUSE REOPENING AMERICA PLAN: www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica

Grow Cedar Valley's Reopening Requirements



1 Continue telework where possible.

2 Employees, Guests and Investors will review screening questionnaire before entering work space.

3 If Employees, Guests, or Investors answer yes to any of the screening questions, they must submit a hard-copy or online GCV Screening Questionnaire.

4 Employees, Guests, and Investors who are ill or exhibiting symptoms are asked/required to stay home.

5 Practice social distancing. [6 feet apart]

6 Limit face-to-face interaction. No in-office meetings or board room rentals.

7 Masks should be worn anytime you are away from your desk, in meetings with others, using common spaces, or away from the workplace (e.g., off-site, work-related meeting).

8 Office front door will remain locked and backdoor will remain unlocked but not propped open

9 Large board room remains closed and limit use of shared spaces.

10 Small and medium board rooms can be used on an individual basis to ensure adequate separation between staff.

11 Commonly used spaces and frequently used surfaces will be sanitized twice daily.

12 Maintain a clear desk (free of employee memorabilia) for ease of cleaning and sanitizing

13 Discontinue use of communal coffee pot and drink cooler.

14 Work travel is discouraged and will be addressed on an individual basis.

Any employee who is unwilling to follow the return-to-work guidelines will be required to work remotely and are encouraged to contact Cary Darrah.

Team Responsibilities

Staff is assigned to teams with designated days to be in/work in physical work space. The days of the week in office will alternate each week. Staff will still have the option to work remotely, but will only be able to go into the office on the days your team is designated.

- Team A: Cary, Sandi, Bette, Jim, Kim, Melissa, Teri
- Team B: Lisa, Molly, Will, Aaron, Aubree, Wes

A Team Calendar has been created as a quick reference guide. It will tell you which team is allowed in the office on a given day and/or week. [Refer to Appendix D or uploaded to Microsoft teams]

Responsibilities include:

- Use Microsoft Team specific channels to communicate schedule, locking of office back door, cleaning of high usage areas and items.
 - Channels have been set up for you. Click on the Teams icon on the left side of your screen, the team channel should be listed in the left hand column.
- Communicate your schedule for the following week at the Friday huddle. If you can't attend the huddle, post in teams or email to someone who can share it.
- Maintain a business casual dress code. More professional attire may be required based on special meetings or customer visits. [Refer to page 13 of Employee Handbook.]
- Coordinate with Team members in office as to who will clean the shared spaces and items. [Refer to Cleaning of Shared Spaces Protocol.– Appendix E]
- Continue to receive calls on cell phone.
 - The “activate special” button will remain on and calls will be sent automatically to voicemail. Molly will continue to check those.
 - If you are expecting a call coming into the office, deactivate the “alert special” button on receptionist phone.
 - **IMPORTANT:** If you deactivate the “alert special” button, please reactivate it before you leave the office.

Physical Distancing

- Staff should maintain social distancing (6 feet apart) at all times.
- Masks should be worn anytime you are away from your desk, in meetings with others, using common spaces, or away from the workplace.
- Employees are not allowed to share any personal items, including PPE.
- All staff will enter through the back door to decrease exposure to guest entrance and receptionist.
- The front office door will remain locked and the back door will be unlocked but not propped open.
- Limit face-to-face interaction.
- Staff meetings are to be conducted virtually through Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams.
- Maintain constant communication with coworkers through Microsoft Teams.
- No in-office meetings or board room rentals.
- Teams will inform each other when you enter and exit the office space on your assigned days.
- Large board room will remain closed.
- Small and medium board rooms can be used on an individual basis to ensure adequate separation between staff.
- Any construction worker working in GCV space will require a facemask and will need to give GCV advanced notice before they need access to the space.

All procedures and recommendations are subject to change as we monitor the well-being of staff and follow guidance by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health.

GCV Events/Meetings out-of-office

- Maintain social distancing (6 feet apart) at all times.
- Masks should be worn anytime you are away from the workplace and especially when social distancing is difficult.
- Events should follow the 50% capacity rule.
- Limit the attendees and/or staff to those most essential/pertinent/involved/applicable.
- Remaining staff or guests should view event via virtual options if those are available.
- Conduct as much of the meeting and/or event outside as possible.
- If masks or social distancing are difficult to manage or are impractical for conducting the event and/or meeting:
 1. Consider postponing/rescheduling event.
 2. Encourage everyone (employees and attendees) to follow hygiene and safety protocols
 3. Allow staff and attendees to opt out if they are not comfortable.

Travel

- Work travel is discouraged and will be addressed on an individual basis.
- When traveling for personal reasons, it is highly encouraged that employees follow social distancing, hygiene and safety protocols to ensure a safe return to the office.
- If employee is exposed to or think they have been exposed to COVID-19 during their travel, Grow Cedar will support working remotely or self-quarantine.
- If employee develops symptoms during or post travel, employee must follow screening and reporting procedures listed under *Screening & Reporting* on page 7 of this guide.

All procedures and recommendations are subject to change as we monitor the well-being of staff and follow guidance by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health.

Screening & Reporting

- Employees, Guests, and Investors who are ill or exhibiting symptoms are asked/required to stay home.
- Employees will need to review the screening questionnaire outside the back office door **BEFORE** entering.
 - If you answer **YES** to any of the questions, please:
 1. Return home
 2. Notify supervisor immediately
 3. Fill out and submit the GCV COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire ([hardcopy](#) or [online](#))
- Any employee with a fever of over 100 .4 degrees is required to stay home or will be sent home.
- If any employee develops symptoms while at work, they will be required to:
 1. Return home
 2. Notify supervisor immediately
 3. Fill out and submit the GCV COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire ([hardcopy](#) or [online](#))
 4. Fill out the Test Iowa Assessment <https://www.testiowa.com/en>
- Employees who have been in contact with another coworker who develops symptoms while at work, may be asked to work remotely.
- Employee may return when they (Black Hawk County Health Department, 2020):
 - Have had no fever for at least 72 hours (3 days) without the use of fever reducing medicine AND
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

All procedures and recommendations are subject to change as we monitor the well-being of staff and follow guidance by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health.

Cleaning, Hygiene & Infection Control

- Office will be cleaned prior to returning employees to work.
- Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and hand soap are provided by the employer and placed in common areas (kitchen, reception, work room, conference rooms, bathrooms)
- Masks should be worn anytime you are away from your desk, in meetings with others, using common spaces, or away from the workplace, such as an off-site, work-related appointment.
- Employees may use their own masks or reusable masks for staff have been provided by employer.
 - Employees are responsible for washing their masks **at least** once per week.
- Employees are not allowed to share any personal items, including PPE
- Employees are required to clean their offices (keyboards, light switches, phone, chairs, desks) with disinfecting wipes, or spray at the beginning of the day and after and between appointments.
- Maintain a clear desk (free of employee memorabilia) for ease of cleaning and sanitizing.
- Teams will coordinate with each other to ensure that commonly used items and/or spaces (e.g., light switches, door handles, printers, drawer handles, sink facet, door handles, etc.) get wiped down **with disinfecting wipes** twice per day.
- Employees must wash their hands before and after breaks and meals using soap or hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- All personal items brought from home must be taken home every night.
- Internal doors will remain opened unless privacy or noise cancelling is required. If doors must be closed, immediate sanitation of door knobs will be conducted following use.
- Limit use of shared spaces.
- Small and medium board room and work closet can be used on an individual basis to ensure adequate separation between staff.
 - Any employee using the small and medium board room and work closet must clean the space after use following the cleaning protocol posted in each room.
- Large board room remains closed.
- No shared coffee pot.
- Keurig may be used by STAFF ONLY and wiped down with disinfecting wipes after use.
- Pop and Water refrigerator is restricted.
- Water cooler may be used by STAFF ONLY and handle wiped down with disinfecting wipes after use.

Continued on next page →

All procedures and recommendations are subject to change as we monitor the well-being of staff and follow guidance by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health.

Cleaning, Hygiene & Infection Control continued

- No communal food sharing (including pizza) allowed for foreseeable future.
- Consume any food in your personal office space rather than common spaces.
- Any dishes that are used must be washed immediately after each use.
- Staff is strongly encouraged to bring their own dishes, cups, utensils rather than using the communal items in the GCV kitchen.
- Office Cleaning Schedule:
 - Wednesdays: Jim Anfinson - Offices and board rooms
 - Thursdays: Midwest Janitorial - Common Spaces (kitchen, reception, bathrooms, etc.)
- All cleaning and construction personnel are required to wear facemasks when working in Grow Cedar Valley office space.

CLEANING, SANITIZING, DISINFECTING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? (ARTICLE) <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/blog/3208/cleaning-sanitizing-disinfecting.html>

All procedures and recommendations are subject to change as we monitor the well-being of staff and follow guidance by the State of Iowa and Black Hawk County of Public Health.



APPENDIX

- A. GCV COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire
- B. GCV COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire Form
- C. Symptoms of COVID-19
- D. GCV Team Calendar
- E. Cleaning of Shared Spaces Protocol
- F. Cleaning of Conference Rooms, Closet & other work spaces
- G. Employee Assistance Program: [INSERT COMPANY INFO]
- H. Virtual Doctor Visits
- I. Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting: What's the Difference?



Grow Cedar Valley COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire

- Employees, Guests, and Investors who are ill or exhibiting symptoms are required to stay home.
- Employees MUST review this questionnaire BEFORE entering the office.
- If you answer, YES to any of the questions, return home and contact your supervisor immediately!

Screening Questions

1. Do you currently have a fever? * (100.4 or above)
 - YES
 - NO
2. Do you currently have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection? *
 - YES
 - NO
3. Do you currently have absence or shortness of breath? *
 - YES
 - NO
4. Do you currently have a new or a change in cough? *
 - YES
 - NO
5. Do you currently have a new or a change in sore throat? *
 - YES
 - NO
6. In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of Coronavirus-19, or under investigation for Coronavirus-19, or are ill with respiratory illness? *
 - YES
 - NO



7. Have you done any international travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission of Coronavirus-19? See CDC website for a list of affected countries. *

YES

NO

8. Have you or someone you've been in contact with attended a gathering where proper social distancing protocol was not followed in the past 14 days? *

Yes

No

If you answer, YES to any of the questions, return home and contact your supervisor immediately.



Grow Cedar Valley COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire

Employees, Guests, and Investors who are ill or exhibiting symptoms are required to stay home. Guests and Investors, please complete the screening questionnaire and submit before entering Grow Cedar Valley office space. This is for health and safety tracking and reporting purposes. Employees MUST complete and submit questionnaire if they answer yes, to any of the screening questions.

*Required items**

Contact Information

Printed Name* (First & Last):

Date*:

Email*:

Phone*:

Organization*:

Screening Questions

1. Do you currently have a fever? * (100.4 or above)
 YES
 NO
 - i. If yes, what is your temperature? _____
2. Do you currently have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection? *
 YES
 NO
3. Do you currently have absence or shortness of breath? *
 YES
 NO
4. Do you currently have a new or a change in cough? *
 YES
 NO
5. Do you currently have a new or a change in sore throat? *



YES

NO

6. In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of Coronavirus-19, or under investigation for Coronavirus-19, or are ill with respiratory illness? *

YES

NO

7. Have you done any international travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission of Coronavirus-19? See CDC website for a list of affected countries. *

YES

NO

8. Have you or someone you've been in contact with attended a gathering where proper social distancing protocol was not followed in the past 14 days? *

Yes

No

Verification

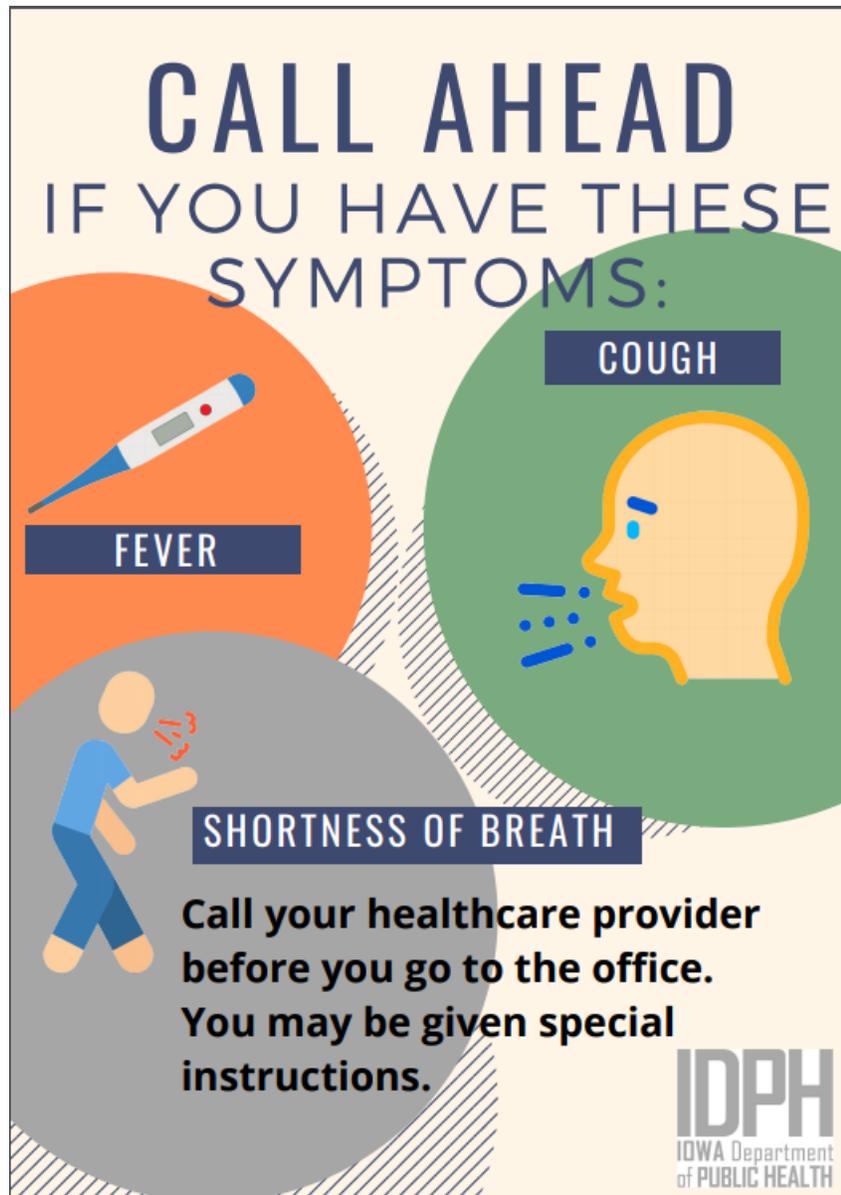
I certify that all answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. *

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure, with an average of 4-5 days:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CALL YOUR DOCTOR: If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.



June

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Team A	16 Team B	17 Team A	18 Team B	19 Team A	20
21	22 Team B	23 Team A	24 Team B	25 Team A	26 Team B	27
28	29 Team A	30 Team B				

July

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Team A	2 Team B	3 Office Closed	4
5	6 Team B	7 Team A	8 Team B	9 Team A	10 Team B	11
12	13 Team A	14 Team B	15 Team A	16 Team B	17 Team A	18
19	20 Team B	21 Team A	22 Team B	23 Team A	24 Team B	25
26	27 Team A	28 Team B	29 Team A	30 Team B	31 Team A	



Please use the disinfecting wipes or spray to complete the following 2x/day:

- Printer screens, lids and tray handles
- Postal machine buttons and tray
- Door handles and light switches
- Kitchen counter, table, stools and faucet
- Microwave and refrigerator handle
- Kitchen and workroom cupboard handles
- Work room counters
- Shared office supplies (e.g., stapler, hole puncher, paper cutter, etc.)



Please use the disinfecting wipes or spray to complete the following after each use:



Remove all personal items



Wipe down desk



Wipe down chair



Wipe down light switches



Wipe down door handles



Wipe down phone (if used)



Remove any dishes, soiled napkins or kleenex.



See a doctor whenever, wherever. Virtual Visits

When you're sick and need care quick, a Virtual Visit is a convenient way to start feeling better faster.

With a Virtual Visit, you can see and talk to a doctor via mobile device or computer – 24/7, no appointment needed. The doctor can give you a diagnosis and prescription*, if needed. And with a UnitedHealthcare plan, your cost is \$40 or less.

To get started with a Virtual Visit, go to uhc.com/virtualvisits.

Get care in 20 minutes or less.

Use a Virtual Visit for these minor medical needs:

- Bladder infection/Urinary tract infection
- Bronchitis
- Cold/flu
- Fever
- Pinkeye
- Rash
- Sinus problems
- Sore throat
- Stomachache

Prepare for your Virtual Visit.

Have these three items ready to register and complete your Virtual Visit:

- Health plan ID card
- Credit card
- Pharmacy location

* Prescription services may not be available in all states.

** Based on analysis of 2016 UnitedHealthcare ER claim volumes, where ER visits are low-acuity and could be treated in a Virtual Visit, PCP, or urgent/convenient care setting.

Virtual visits are not an insurance product, health care provider or a health plan. Unless otherwise required, benefits are available only when services are delivered through a Designated Virtual Network Provider. Virtual visits are not intended to address emergency or life-threatening medical conditions and should not be used in those circumstances. Services may not be available at all times or in all locations.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company and its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates. Health Plan coverage provided by or through a UnitedHealthcare company.

[Facebook.com/UnitedHealthcare](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedHealthcare) [Twitter @UHC](https://twitter.com/UHC) [YouTube.com/UnitedHealthcare](https://www.youtube.com/UnitedHealthcare)

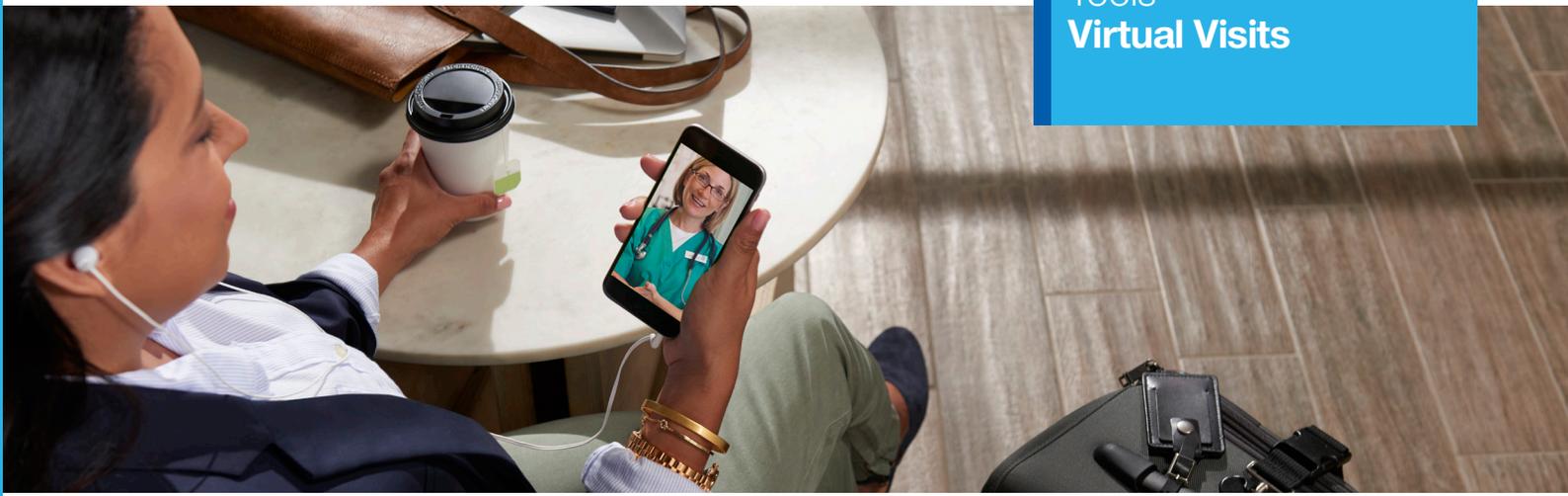
MT-1146173 9/17 ©2017 United HealthCare Services, Inc. 17-5522



Virtual Visits can save time and money.

An estimated 25 percent of ER visits could be treated with a Virtual Visit — which brings a potential \$1,700 cost down to \$40.**





See a doctor whenever, wherever. Virtual Visits

Get access to care 24/7 with Virtual Visits. A Virtual Visit lets you see a doctor from your mobile device or computer without an appointment.

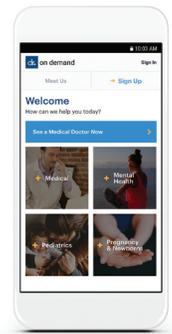
Choose from an AmWell or Doctor on Demand network provider and pay \$40 or less for the visit.

To learn more and start a visit, go to uhc.com/virtualvisits or the UnitedHealthcare Health4Me® app. You can also go directly to amwell.com or doctorondemand.com—or the AmWell or Doctor On Demand mobile apps.

Virtual Visits are covered under your health plan benefits either way you decide to access care.



AmWell app



Doctor On Demand app*

Tips for registering:

1. Locate your member ID number on your health plan ID card.
2. Have your credit card ready to cover any costs not covered by your health plan.
3. Choose a pharmacy that's open in case you're given a prescription.* *



To learn more about Virtual Visits, go to uhc.com/virtualvisits or myuhc.com.

* Doctor On Demand does not support any version of Internet Explorer®.

** Prescription services may not be available in all states.

All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Virtual Visits are not an insurance product, health care provider or a health plan. Unless otherwise required, benefits are available only when services are delivered through a Designated Virtual Network Provider. Virtual Visits are not intended to address emergency or life-threatening medical conditions and should not be used in those circumstances. Services may not be available at all times or in all locations.

Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates. Health Plan coverage provided by or through a UnitedHealthcare company.

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CLEANING, SANITIZING, DISINFECTING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



WebstaurantStore (/) / Food Service Resources (/food-service-resources.html) / Blog (/blog/)

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting: What's the Difference?

An essential part of running a successful business is maintaining a clean environment. Whether you stay on top of your cleaning by using a **cleaning checklist** (<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/153/restaurant-cleaning-checklist.html>) or schedule, ensuring that your location is cleaned regularly can help keep your staff and customers healthy.

It's important to understand the different depths of cleaning to decide what method and practices you should take in your location to slow the spread of diseases and viruses. We'll be exploring the differences between cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and sterilizing so that you can best incorporate them in your janitorial regimen.

*Click here to see the CDC's recommendations for **preventing the spread of Coronavirus**.

What Is the Difference Between Cleaning and Sanitizing?

The main difference between cleaning and sanitizing is that cleaning is the act of clearing debris and deposits on a surface, while sanitizing involves killing bacteria after the surface has already been cleared or wiped off.

When comparing cleaning vs sanitizing, you'll want to make sure that cleaning happens first regardless of the surface, and that sanitizing follows depending on the area. Items that come into contact with foods and that are often touched should be sanitized, while locations like hallway floors and windows do not need to be regularly sanitized as they are considered low-risk surfaces.

Cleaning

To clean something means to remove all of the visible contaminations on the surface, including dirt, spills, food particles, dust, etc., by washing, brushing, or wiping the area. This process is surface level and does not eliminate germs but can help reduce their numbers. This is expected to be the first step in the cleansing process. Common cleaning products include:

- Soaps
- Detergents
- Vacuums
- Dusters
- Degreasers
- Glass Cleaners



Sanitizing

Sanitizing means to reduce the amount of microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, and fungi on a surface after it has been cleaned. The sanitizer used must reduce the number of bacteria to the level that is deemed safe by the public health standards. To meet CDC requirements, sanitizing chemicals must kill 99.999% of the test bacteria in under 30 seconds.

Although sanitizing reduces the growth of harmful bacteria, it does not kill all of the viruses on a surface. Sanitizing is meant to be used as a preventative measure and is an extremely important practice in restaurants, schools, corporate offices, and hospitals. Every surface that comes into contact with food should be sanitized regularly, often several times a day.

Disinfect vs Sanitize

The difference between sanitizing and disinfecting is based on the amount of bacteria each process eliminates. While sanitizing is meant to kill the majority of germs, it cannot make antiviral claims. Disinfecting is more potent than sanitizing and can kill nearly 100% of bacteria, viruses, and fungi while targeting specific disease-carrying microorganisms like the flu virus, norovirus, and coronavirus.

Because disinfecting is more intense than sanitizing, disinfectant will often be used in areas with a vulnerable population, such as healthcare facilities and daycare centers. Sanitizing would be enough for foodservice items such as tabletops and cutting boards, but a disinfectant would be needed for places like bathrooms and fitness centers.

Disinfecting

To disinfect means to kill specific viruses and pathogens on a surface using a disinfectant. These cleaning agents must kill 99.999% of infectious bacteria, viruses, and fungi within a 5-10 minute period. It is recommended to disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Bathrooms should always be disinfected due to the pathogens those surfaces can harbor that can lead to the spread of disease. Common disinfectants include:

- Bleach
- Alcohol
- Chlorine

Difference Between Sterilizing and Disinfecting

Although the terms are used interchangeably, there are differences between disinfecting and sterilizing. Disinfecting eliminates nearly 100% of viruses and bacteria on surfaces, while sterilizing will kill all of the viruses, bacteria, fungi, and bacterial spores on an item.

While disinfecting is useful in most settings and on regularly touched surfaces, sterilizing is usually just reserved for instruments used in medical facilities and hospital settings.

Sterilizing

To sterilize an item means to completely eradicate microbes on its surface, including bacterial spores, bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Healthcare facilities are highly dependent on the sterilization of foods, medicines, and equipment to prevent infections in wounds and the spread of diseases from patient to patient. A few methods can be used to sterilize products:

- Chemicals
- Steam
- Heat
- Radiation

What Is the Proper Way to Sanitize a Table That Has Been Used for Preparing Food?

Follow these steps to sanitize a table that has been used for preparing food:

1. **Clean** the surface of any visible debris.

2. **Rinse** the surface with soap and clean water. Do not use high-pressure washers that can end up spraying bacteria over a larger area.
3. **Sanitize** the surface with food-safe sanitizer. Rinse the sanitizer if needed per the chemical's directions.
4. Allow the surface to **air dry** for a minimum of 30 seconds to a minute to allow the sanitizer to work. Use this time to implement a clean break if your location requires food prep to be documented in logs and time shifts.



Because of how easily bacteria can be transferred to food and cause illness, proper sanitizing practices are highly necessary in restaurant atmospheres. It's important to use sanitizing methods in your restaurant kitchen to clean tabletops, cutting boards, and utensils to **prevent cross-contamination** (<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/48/preventing-cross-contamination.html>) that can cause food poisoning and allergic reactions.

What to Sanitize

The general rule of sanitation is that if an item comes into contact with food, it should be sanitized. Here are common items that will need to be regularly sanitized in your kitchen:

- ✔ Cutting Boards
- ✔ Worktables
- ✔ Pots and Pans
- ✔ Serving Utensils
- ✔ Countertops
- ✔ Cooking Equipment

When to Sanitize

Your **health inspector will be looking for proper cleaning** (<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/16/health-inspection-checklist.html>) and sanitizing practices in your restaurant. Follow the steps below to know when you should be sanitizing in your kitchen:

- ✔ Whenever you're done with a food prep task
- ✔ Whenever you're switching between food types and ingredients
- ✔ If your task is interrupted, forcing you to walk away from the station
- ✔ Every 4 hours

How to Disinfect

For frequently touched surfaces, follow these steps to properly disinfect them:

1. **Read** the label of the disinfectant you plan on using to ensure that you understand the directions for that product.
2. **Clean** the surface of any visible debris.
3. **Rinse** the surface with soap and clean water. For doorknobs and handrails, use general-purpose cleansing wipes.
4. **Disinfect** the surface with your disinfectant by following the directions on the product. Leave the disinfectant on the surface for 3-5 minutes or as long as the product calls for.
5. **Rinse** the disinfectant off the surface if the product calls for it.

What to Disinfect

Here are some items in your facility that should be regularly disinfected:

- ✔ Light Switches
- ✔ Door Handles
- ✔ Elevator Buttons

- ✔ Handrails
- ✔ Bathroom Surfaces
- ✔ Faucet Handles
- ✔ Computer Keyboards and Mice
- ✔ Phones

When to Disinfect

Disinfecting schedules may vary depending on your facility and the number of guests in your establishment. The following are some suggested moments when disinfecting should take place:

- ✔ Once a day at minimum
- ✔ At a higher frequency during cold and flu seasons
- ✔ At a higher frequency during a virus outbreak
- ✔ Whenever bodily fluids are on a surface

Do Disinfectant Wipes Kill Viruses?

Because disinfectant wipes have shorter dwell times than most disinfectant chemicals, there is concern that they do not have enough time to kill the viruses on a surface. The key to successfully disinfecting a surface is to read the details on the cleaning wipes you choose to use. To confidently target viruses like the norovirus, influenza, rhinovirus, and coronavirus, the CDC advises on using **disinfectant wipes** ([/45551/pre-moistened-sanitizing-disinfectant-surface-wipes.html?filter=type:disinfectants&vendor=WipesPlus](https://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/pdfs/45551pre-moistened-sanitizing-disinfectant-surface-wipes.html?filter=type:disinfectants&vendor=WipesPlus)) that contain at least 60% alcohol.

Prevent Disease

While cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting are essential parts of the **restaurant food safety guidelines** (<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/128/food-safety-guidelines.html>) for preventing diseases, there are additional practices that you and your employees can take to maintain a clean and healthy work environment.

Here are some disease prevention methods you can implement in your business:

- ✔ Clean visibly soiled surfaces immediately
- ✔ Use hands-free dispensers, water faucets, and trash receptacles
- ✔ Use gloves when cleaning soiled surfaces or during food prep (Do not touch other surfaces during the task)
- ✔ Dispose of cleaning wipes and paper towels used to clean surfaces immediately after completing the task
- ✔ Use clean mop water when switching between rooms or when water is visibly dirty
- ✔ Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water after using the restroom, between switching tasks, after sneezing, or touching soiled tissues
- ✔ Keep staff members home when they are sick
- ✔ Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose
- ✔ Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, then immediately dispose of the tissue



CDC Recommendations For Coronavirus

When protecting your business from COVID-19 these are some of the **recommendations from the CDC** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>).

- Clean frequently touched surfaces multiple times a day with sanitizers or disinfectants.
- Ensure that you and employees wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice.

- If soap is not readily available, use sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol or more and rub your hands together until they feel dry.
- Do not touch your eyes, mouth, or nose with unwashed hands.
- Enforce social distancing when possible if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This may mean closing non-essential businesses or transforming your location to offer pick-up/drive-thru services only. Reduce your staff to essential personnel only.
- Stay home or keep employees home for 2 weeks if they are exhibiting flu like symptoms.

When comparing the different cleansing practices, the number of bacteria will decrease as you progress from cleaning to disinfecting, to finally being fully eradicated with sterilizing. The only way to ensure that your cleaning program is successful is to provide your staff members with the proper training and guidelines. You may choose to **hire a cleaning service for your restaurant** (<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/127/hiring-a-restaurant-cleaning-service.html>) to make your business a healthy place for your customers and employees.

Posted in: [Cleaning Tips \(/blog/cleaning-tips/47/\)](#) | By [Janine Jones](#)



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