

Table 2: Disinfection Chart *

Adapted from *Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Personal Services: Tattooing, Ear/Body piercing, and Electrolysis*. Health Canada, July 1999. This chart is not intended to be inclusive of all approved high, intermediate and low-level disinfectants.

| Level of Disinfection | When to use | Disinfectant Active Ingredients | Contact Times (Approximately) | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| HIGH LEVEL Kills all microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, and viruses) except bacterial spores | Use on semi-critical items that come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes but do not penetrate them | 1:50 chlorine bleach** solution (1 part bleach and 49 parts water) 1,000 ppm (parts per million) | >20 minutes | Inexpensive, fast acting | Corrodes metal, may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking |
| | | 2% glutaraldehyde (not recommended for personal service settings) | 45 minutes Follow Manufacturer's instructions | Non-corrosive to metal, rubber or plastics, reusable | Toxic fumes, expensive |
| | | 6% hydrogen peroxide | 45 minutes Follow Manufacturer's instructions | Environmentally friendly, no residue | Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver) |
| | | 7% stabilized hydrogen peroxide | 30 minutes Follow manufacturer's instructions | Environmentally friendly, no residual, irritant to skin or to respiratory tract | Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver) |
| | | 0.55% ortho-phthalaldehyde (OPA) | 10 minutes Follow Manufacturer's instructions | Fast acting, no mixing needed | Stains proteins |
| INTERMEDIATE – LEVEL Kills most bacteria, fungi, viruses and mycobacterial (tuberculocidal) | Use on semi-critical items | 70-90% Isopropyl alcohol | 10 minutes | Fast acting, leaves no residue | Can damage rubber and plastics |
| | As above | 70-90% Ethyl alcohol | 10 minutes | Fast acting, leaves no residue | Can damage rubber and plastics |
| | | 1:50 chlorine bleach** (1 part bleach and 49 parts water) | >10 minutes | Inexpensive, fast acting | Corrodes metal, may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking |
| LOW-LEVEL Kills some viruses bacteria and fungi | Use on non-critical items. Items that contact intact skin and not mucous membranes, or items that do not ordinarily touch the client. May be used for routine housekeeping | Quaternary ammonium | Follow manufacturer's instructions | Good cleaning agent for environmental surfaces | Cannot be used on instruments, not recommended as an antiseptic |
| | | 1:500 chlorine bleach** solution (1 part bleach and 499 parts water) or 100 ppm | >10 minutes | Inexpensive, fast acting | Corrodes metal, may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking |
| | | 3% hydrogen peroxide | 10 minutes | Environmental safe | Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver) |
| | | Phenols | Follow manufacturer's instructions | Easy to obtain, cleans and disinfects | Residual phenols on porous materials may cause tissue irritation even when thoroughly rinsed. For environmental surfaces only |

* Please adhere to manufacturer's instructions for use, some disinfectants may require rinsing after use

** Based on 5.25% chlorine bleach

For more information, call

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**visit our website at
www.healthunit.org/infectious**