

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting and Sterilizing

Do you know which
one you need?

LEARN THE DIFFERENCE



A scanning electron micrograph (SEM) showing several rod-shaped bacteria. The bacteria have a textured, slightly irregular surface and are arranged in various orientations. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the three-dimensional structure of the microorganisms.

**The first step in
fighting pathogens
on surfaces is
knowing the enemy:
bacteria, viruses,
and fungi.**



Bacteria

- Single-celled organisms
- Can cause infections like strep throat or staph

Viruses

- Smaller than bacteria; need host cells to replicate
- Cause flu, COVID-19, common cold

Fungi

- Includes yeasts and molds
- Cause athlete's foot, ringworm, yeast infections



There are many ways to combat pathogens on surfaces.

Which one do you need?



1. CLEANING
2. SANITIZING
3. DISINFECTING
4. STERILIZING



1 CLEANING

Cleaning can help us remove dirt and debris, but this doesn't mean we're actually killing pathogens.



CLEANING

- ✓ Removes dirt, debris, and organic material
- ✓ Done with water, detergents, and mechanical action
- ✓ Does not kill germs—only removes some of them
- ✓ Essential to prepare surfaces for disinfection



2 SANITIZING



Sanitizing
means
reducing
bacteria to
a safe level.



SANITIZING

- ✓ Reduces bacterial load by 99.9%, bringing it down to a safer level
- ✓ Less rigorous than disinfection, but helps lower infection risk
- ✓ May be appropriate for certain settings, but generally not sufficient for human or animal healthcare facilities



3 DISINFECTING

Disinfecting is the process of destroying pathogens on surfaces, including viruses, bacteria and fungi.



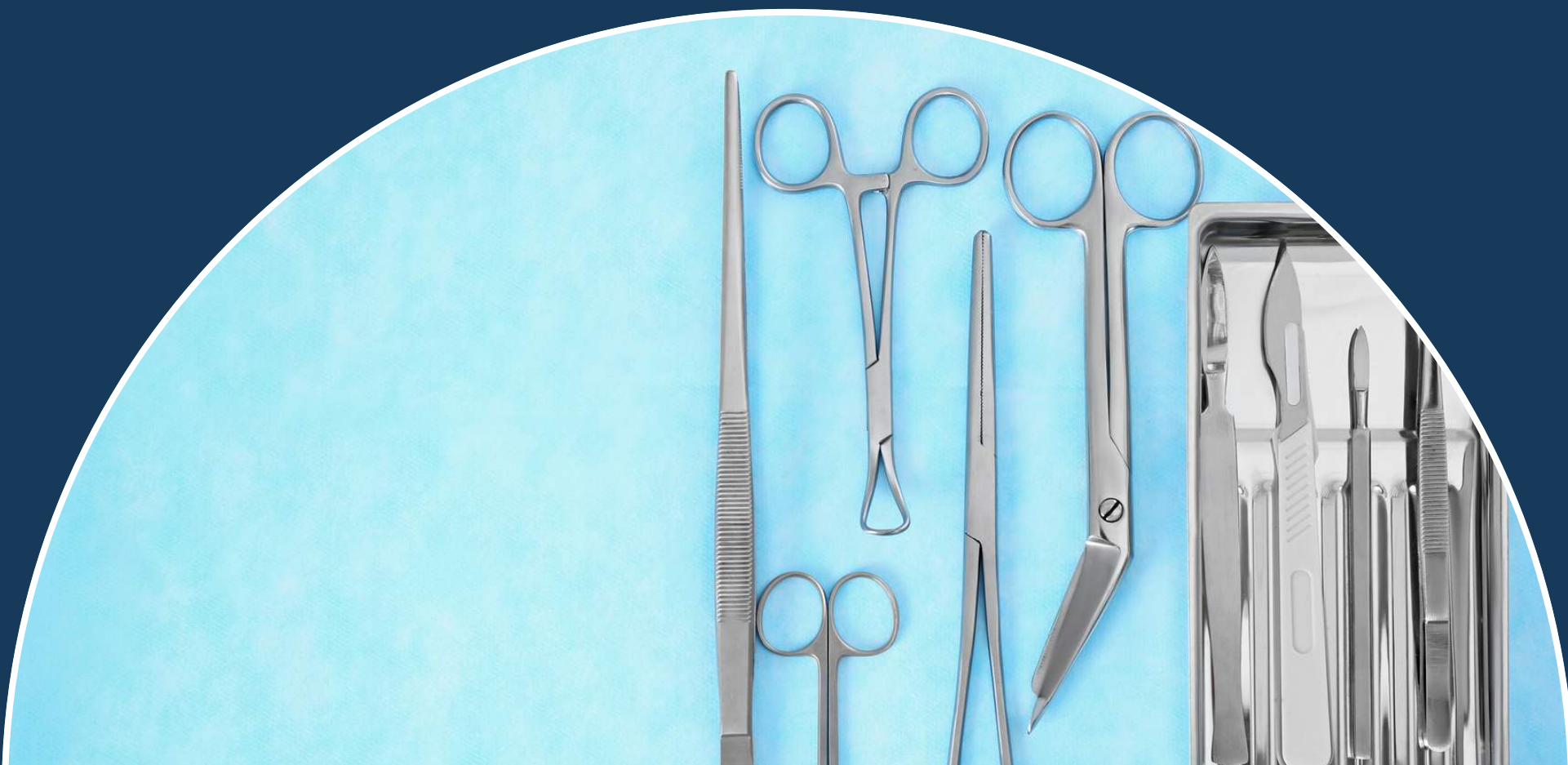
DISINFECTING

- ✓ Kills bacteria, viruses, and fungi
- ✓ Plays a critical role in preventing infection within a variety of medical, veterinary, and personal service environments
- ✓ Achieved with registered chemical products
- ✓ Provides a higher level of efficacy than sanitizing



4 STERILIZING

Sterilizing delivers the highest level of protection, often used for equipment that has come in contact with non-intact skin or normally sterile areas.



STERILIZING

- ✓ Destroys all microbial life, including spores
- ✓ Required for critical medical equipment that contacts sterile tissue
- ✓ The highest level of killing germs



A person in blue scrubs is using a floor buffer to clean a hospital room. The background is blurred, showing medical equipment and a yellow chair.

**THE RIGHT PROCESS
=
BETTER INFECTION
CONTROL**

and healthier outcomes





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