5 Steps to Sanitizing a Chromebook

Step 1: Power off the device. You will be applying liquid solutions to your Chromebook, so powering it off is a must.

Step 2: Remove any accessories or plug-ins such as cases, USBs, and headphones. Once removed, cases can be separately disinfected with sanitizing wipes or spray.

Step 3: Clean the screen with an LCD-safe solution applied to a microfiber cloth. Strong alcohols can eat away the coating on LCD screens. However, LCD-safe solutions such as 50% isopropyl alcohol (diluted with distilled water) and dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride can be used to properly disinfect Chromebook screens. Never use Windex® or similar products, which contain ammonia, and never use any solutions containing acetone, ethyl alcohol (ethanol), ethyl acid, or methyl chloride. Also, while diluted vinegar may be safe for removing dirt and smudges from LCD screens, it's not an effective disinfectant against many types of common germs, including those that cause colds, flus, and viruses.

To clean, wet a microfiber cloth in LCD-safe solution so that it's damp enough to feel wet, but not damp enough to create any drips (drips are bad. In extreme cases they can ruin the bottom edge of your screen if they get sucked between the layers of the LCD through capillary action). Rub the microfiber gently on the screen in a back-and-forth motion, using the broadest strokes you can. Avoid small circular motions, which can sometimes leave buffed-out spots or whorl marks on the screen.

Never use paper towels, kitchen rags, or any type of cloth other than microfiber. These could damage your screen.

Step 4: Use 70% isopropyl alcohol applied to a soft cotton rag to wipe down the keyboard and external chassis. DO NOT spray your device with disinfectant. It's important that the solution is applied to a rag or cloth first so that liquid doesn't seep into the keyboard. This can damage the keyboard itself or important components housed beneath. CAUTION–70% Isopropyl alcohol is highly flammable, so keep it and anything covered in it away from any sources of ignition.

Step 5: Wait for the alcohol solution to completely evaporate before turning your Chromebook back on.

The 70% isopropyl alcohol in the solution is non-conductive (meaning there's no need to worry about that part affecting the electronic components of the device). It's the other 30%, which consists mainly of water, that *is* conductive. Because of this, it's important that you power down your device pre-cleaning and wait until the alcohol is completely evaporated before turning your Chromebook back on. If you're like us, you may be thinking, "why don't I just use a higher concentration of alcohol to speed the drying process?" Well, counterintuitively, the disinfectant properties of isopropyl alcohol drop off rapidly at concentrations higher than 70%[3], so in this case, stronger isn't better.

It’s Cleaning Time!

Disinfecting your technology is never a bad idea! However, in the middle of an outbreak as concerning as Coronavirus, it’s more important than ever to take extra steps to defend your school. By expertly sanitizing classroom Chromebooks, you can become a virus-fighting superhero and get closer to shutting down outbreaks that threaten your students and staff.