

## **Environmental Concerns for our Babies and Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Babies and young children explore their environment by touching and tasting. Kids quickly spread illness to other children and adults (grandparents) simply by sharing a toy or item that has germs on it.

Now the Coronavirus has invaded our country and city and we find ourselves in uncharted territories as we try to stem its spread. There are many sources of very important information out there regarding hand-washing, social distancing, etc. I know all families are stressed as we try to take special precautions to care for one another while maintaining some part of our normal activities of daily living, so I went in search of simple ways to clean, sanitize and disinfect our homes, particularly babies' toys, pacifiers and teethingers along with their siblings' toys and shared surfaces where they play and eat. Rather than provide the wealth of information I found, I will guide parents in the right direction to review on your own. Seeking information only from trusted sources, I recommend the following:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics and their online publication [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) published a great article on **Cleaners, Sanitizers & Disinfectants** which explains the difference between routine cleaning with soap and water, sanitizing to remove some germs, and disinfecting after cleaning to kill germs. There are options from bleach solutions to alternative and more environmentally friendly homemade cleaning products, cautions and how to use them.
- Another article on [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) is **2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)** which gives a concise review of this virus, symptoms, who is at risk, how to protect your family and teach your children techniques, and talking to your children about COVID-19.
- Our local and state Health Departments are also good and trusted sources of information specific to our immediate community.

As you read the articles, keep in mind that not all toys and surfaces are created equally. Solid toys are easiest to clean, but many toys have batteries or are soft plush. Our dishwashers and home laundries are blessings for sure, but other surfaces require either homemade or commercial solutions to spray and let air dry. There are many other sites that will give you guidance in this area.