

The Best Ways to Disinfect Your Hotel Room During the Pandemic, According to Health Experts

How to disinfect your hotel room during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to medical experts.



Travel remains complicated while the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the world, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still [recommends staying home](#) for your own safety as well as for others. But if you do decide to travel, [local laws permitting](#), you'll want to take as many safety precautions as possible. This includes sanitization, even if the hotel you're staying in has stringent protocols in place.

To help, *Travel + Leisure* turned to medical professionals for advice on how to disinfect a hotel room when checking in during the pandemic. Below, we review the steps you should take upon booking and arriving at your hotel room.



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1. Communicate with your hotel and confirm cleaning procedures.

Before booking, contact your hotel, and don't be afraid to ask questions about the property's COVID-19 cleaning protocols.

"Start by asking your hotel if they've had any positive cases among staff or guests, and review the COVID-19 updates on their website," says Dr. Jack Shevel, founder and CEO of [Zappogen](#), a distributor of hospital-grade

sanitizing products. Dr. Shevel himself is immunocompromised, so he understands the importance of keeping yourself safe while traveling during the pandemic.

He adds, "Request their sanitization and disinfection policies: Are temperature checks mandatory for everyone coming in and out? How frequently are employees tested?" He also recommends checking in remotely and using keyless room access whenever possible.

"I would also ask the hotel how long ago your room was occupied," says Dr. Shevel. He notes that if the hotel isn't disinfecting rooms thoroughly, allowing new guests to enter a room that was occupied less than 24 hours ago could be hazardous. Airbnb, for example, recommends a minimum of 24 hours.

"Ask the hotel if they are disinfecting airborne pathogens via an electrostatic sprayer that uses an EPA-registered disinfectant. If hotels are taking the proper precautions, they should be disinfecting using a diffuser that sprays a mist into the air and kills airborne pathogens, as well as cleaning surfaces. If hotels are only wiping down surfaces, it isn't sufficient to keep guests protected."

He explains, "Disinfection has traditionally been achieved by wiping down non-porous surfaces. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, is transmitted primarily by inhalation or from touching contaminated surfaces and then transferring the virus to your face and eyes. The [latest studies](#) indicate that the virus acts as an 'aerosol' and can remain airborne for up to 10 minutes."

For this reason, Dr. Shevel recommends bringing your own diffuser and disinfectant to spray down the hotel room. “Ideally, you need something that kills pathogens in the air because the virus hangs in the air for long periods of time,” he says. “In addition, surfaces, floors, and porous surfaces such as curtains, fabrics, and couches need to be accounted for and disinfected.”

Before your arrival, you can also ask the hotel to remove unnecessary high-touch items, which pose an added risk of exposure. “Ask the hotel to remove the comforter or bedspread and throw pillows from your room,” advises Dr. Shady Salib, doctor of internal medicine and chief of staff at [Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center](#).

2. Sanitize your luggage.

The cleaning process should begin before you ever enter your hotel room, especially if you flew. “Don’t forget to wipe down or spray your luggage,” says Dr. Shevel. “Remember that luggage is handled by numerous people and is stacked, so failure to wipe or spray your luggage is just inviting ‘coronavirus room service.’”

3. Bring your own items.

Save room for extra items on your packing list, if you’re planning to travel during the pandemic. What you normally rely on a hotel to provide may not be available this year — and even if it is, the less you touch items that others may have also come into contact with, the better.

“Bring your own cups or water bottles [for your] hotel room,” advises Dr. Salib. “If you don’t have cups, wipe down the glasses with soap and water.”

You should also use soap and water to wipe down the ice bucket in your room, he says

“Make sure to have your own [hand sanitizer](#), [masks](#), and wipes, though some hotels have been known to provide them for guests,” says Dr. Salib.

4. Open a window for ventilation.

Upon entering your room, Dr. Shevel recommends opening the window for ventilation to allow airborne pathogens to escape. Be leery of staying in rooms that are sealed to the outside; having a door or window where you can let in fresh air is ideal during the pandemic.

5. Sanitize your room.

Dr. Salib recommends bringing your own disinfectant wipes and starting with high-touch areas and items. Turn it into a checklist:

- Phones
- Clocks
- Remotes
- Nightstands
- Light switches (including switches on lamps)
- Doorknobs
- Toilets
- Showerheads
- Bathroom counter
- Any other surfaces that are often used

“You can also put the TV remote in a plastic bag, if you would rather not touch it at all,” advises Dr. Salib. “Bring a toothbrush sanitizer, so it doesn’t have to touch the bathroom counter, use your own pen during check-in, and wipe down room cards.”

Basically, the less you touch throughout the process, the better. Anything that you cannot avoid touching should be disinfected prior to making any contact.

“Door handles should be wiped down regularly, and you should wash your hands immediately after touching them. TV remotes should be sealed, bar fridges should be empty, and all toiletries and soaps should be single-use and individually wrapped and sealed,” adds Dr. Shevel. “If you do bring a sprayer, I recommend disinfecting your shoes and clothes before walking into your hotel room each time you leave and have been in public.”

6. Wash your hands.

Last but certainly not least, keep scrubbing your hands on the regular. “I cannot stress enough to wash your hands,” says Dr. Salib, echoing the mantra of 2020.