



Cleaning Devices/Objects that Contact Intact Skin

Some research procedures require participants to share the use of objects or devices that do not penetrate the skin¹, such as computers, computer mice, phones, tablets, writing instruments, pedometers, or eye trackers. In general, best practice is to disinfect or sanitize these materials between participant use per device manufacturer guidance and disinfectant manufacturer instructions. The Human Research Participant Protection Program and Environment, Health and Safety recommend the following common hygiene practices, below, when sharing these objects between participants. Use all disinfectants in accordance with manufacturer guidelines:

- Encourage participants to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry them before and after using the objects. Though soap and water are usually preferred, commercially prepared hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be substituted.
- If participants have minor cuts or wounds in the area that will be in contact with the object, have them wear a band-aid or another similar protective cover.
- If reasonable, have the participants wear disposable gloves or other personal protective equipment
 - *Note: dispose of sheaths or gloves which have not been contaminated by biological or research materials per requirements for [Disposal of Nonhazardous Laboratory Waste As Regular Trash for Ithaca Campus](#). Units that are not located in Ithaca can [contact EHS for assistance](#).*
- When possible, sheath the object in a plastic sleeve, especially if the object is made of a porous material that cannot be cleaned and sanitized properly or there is prolonged contact with skin.
- Wipe off any obvious fluids, such as perspiration, between uses. Generally, sweat is not considered to contain materials that may be infectious. Other bodily fluids must be considered as potentially infectious.
- If the object is constructed of absorbent material, such as fabric or sponge, wash/laundry between uses with the highest temperature water allowed.
- If using blood pressure cuffs, wrap the cuffs over a shirt sleeve or another appropriate material. If that is not possible, wipe the inside of the cuffs clean with sanitizing wipes and dry them before use, and wash periodically using the manufacturer's instructions.
- If using an object that uses a liquid gel (such as an ultrasound), sheath the object in a plastic sleeve and use fresh gel for each participant. If not possible to sheath the object, wipe it with a sanitizing wipe or following device manufacturer's instructions.
- If an object needs to be disinfected due to frequent touching or potential contamination, consult with EHS prior to use of an appropriate chemical disinfectant to sanitize objects:
 - 70-90% ethanol
 - 1:100 household bleach (or Clorox Bleach Wipes) OR a quaternary ammonium compound such as Cavicide or Virex II 256 (follow product label for use-dilution)

¹ If your research involves using devices or procedures that penetrate the skin or come into contact with a mucous membrane (such as saliva, blood, or genital fluids), or if your participant population comprises people with known allergies or skin injuries, contact the IRB for further guidance.

Questions?

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EHS Biosafety Office: AskEHS@cornell.edu, 607-255-8200