

Video Clip Transcript for Misuse of Cleaning Products

Pam Toppel, Regional Director Environmental Services for OSF Healthcare says a CDC study showing 1 in 3 people misuse cleaning products to kill COVID-19 is alarming.

She advises it is important to strictly follow label instructions because chemicals can be dangerous and harmful to your health.

“We have to remember that disinfectants are registered and classified as pesticides so if you keep that in mind, we would never want to ingest pesticides or mist ourselves with pesticides.” (:14)

The CDC found 10% of the 500 adults surveyed reported misting their bodies with a cleaner or disinfectant spray -- a dangerous practice according to Toppel.

“You have to be very careful because a disinfectant, when you put it into the air it aerosolizes and by misting it onto your body you actually inhale and it turn it ends up in your lungs.” (:14)

Mixing products is especially dangerous. Toppel almost lost a friend that way.

“I have had a close friend mix chemicals because she thought it would be stronger for what she was doing and that it would smell nicer. Well, actually it caused that odorless vapor and when she was found she was very close to the end of life and they were able to bring her back,” Toppel shared. “She now has damage; both neurological and respiratory.” (:26)

There are several products being marketed that use ultraviolet light to sanitize surfaces. Toppel says UV light can serve as a supplement, but it shouldn't replace cleaning and disinfecting.

“While you might think you're getting all the pathogens or all the bacteria or all the viruses within your setting, you really don't because it shadows. That's why it's important to do your cleaning and disinfecting prior to using a UV device.” (:18)

According to the CDC survey, 23% responded that only room temperature water should be used to dilute bleach solutions, 35% knew bleach should not be mixed with vinegar, and 58% reported bleach should not be mixed with ammonia. Toppel says most people just don't know how to dilute concentrated chemicals so if possible, she recommends avoiding buying them in that form.

“Ready-to-use is probably the easiest and probably the most convenient way not to get into those situations where you think you need to mix things.” (:12)