

The Coronavirus and Your Stone Countertops

As I write this, the entire world is in a panic over the novel coronavirus, and as a stone expert, my phone is ringing off the hook with questions. Can the coronavirus survive on my stone countertop? If so, for how long? What do I use on my stone to properly kill the virus?

As we look at this situation in the first week of WFH mandates there are many unknown facts about the coronavirus. However, there are several studies that have looked at these questions in the past. One such study was recently published in The Journal of Hospital Infections entitled Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents. Following is a brief summary of this research.

How long can the COVID-19 Coronavirus survive on stone surfaces?

The short answer is, “We don’t know!” However, similar viruses, such as SARS and MERS, can survive for up to 9 days. The common flu virus can last up to 48 hours on a stone surface. Additional studies have shown that the virus can last for over a week, but seems to have a shorter lifespan at temperatures over 86 degrees F. Of course, stone surfaces would rarely reach those high temperatures in an average kitchen environment.

Can you get the coronavirus by touching a contaminated stone countertop?

Again, there is not enough information or studies that confirm that the coronavirus acts similar to other viruses, however, some studies are showing that the virus can be killed with standard household disinfectants. One study showed that disinfectants with 62-71 percent ethanol, 0.5 percent hydrogen peroxide or 0.1 percent sodium hypochlorite (bleach) can inactivate the coronavirus within a minute. Although the study shows that the coronavirus is similar to SARS, it is not yet clear if the coronavirus will act the same as SARS. So, can you get the virus by touching a contaminated stone surface? According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), touching a surface is not believed to be the main way the virus is transferred. The most likely way it is spread is from person-to-person from coughs and sneezing.

How do you properly disinfect your stone surface to kill the virus?

Currently, it is believed that most household disinfectants can kill the virus. However, I have discovered that many people do not know how to properly use these sanitizing solutions. Many people will spray and immediately wipe a disinfectant. **Best practices methodology shows that this method is insufficient to kill the virus. The disinfectant should be allowed to dwell on the countertop for 3-5 minutes to be effective.**

You can make your own disinfectant by mixing one half rubbing alcohol with one half water. Spray the disinfectant on the countertop and thoroughly wet the surface. Allow the solution to sit for 3-5 minutes. Rinse with clean water and then dry with a microfiber cloth.

The best advice is to keep your stone countertop clean is by following some simple steps. As this will also keep your granite in tip-top condition, these five simple maintenance procedures are a great way to reassure nervous clients. For best results, they should be followed very closely.

1. **Clean the countertop daily with a soft white cloth and a neutral cleaner or stone soap. These products are available at most stone and tile suppliers.**

2. ***It may be necessary to buff the countertop with a clean white terry cloth towel if streaking occurs.***
3. ***Once a week, clean with a disinfectant.***
4. ***All granite countertops should be sealed.***
5. ***If the countertop becomes stained, immediately blot the spill with a clean paper towel.***

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the best way to avoid the coronavirus is to:

1. Wash your hands frequently. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
2. Maintain social distancing. Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
4. Practice respiratory hygiene. Make sure you and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Properly dispose of the used tissue immediately. Flushing is a one way to do this.
5. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early. Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

A Final Word of Advice

As the coronavirus spreads, there is sure to be misinformation on how it spreads. The best way to the truth is to keep an eye on the CDC and WHO websites as well as your local health department.

References

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