

How do you choose a → disinfectant?

- > By price?
- > By picture?
- > By brand name?
- > By marketing from a trusted professional?

- > Do you read the instructions on the back?
- > Do you read the safety data on the label?

Not all disinfectants are equal and a cheap household product will not offer adequate protection against an equine infectious disease. A targeted broad spectrum disinfectant is **essential** for both routine yard hygiene and containing an infectious disease outbreak.



Where to start...

The first thing is to check the disinfectant is on the DEFRA approved disinfectant list. They are listed alphabetically here <https://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/>

Do your research!

- > What pathogens does the disinfectant kill? Bacteria, viruses, fungus, mould, spores?

- > What is the disinfectant kill rate? 99.9% or 99.999% Is the 'kill rate' 99.9% or 99.999%? When it comes to disinfectant kill rates, the difference between 99.9% and 99.999% is huge in terms of how many pathogens remain after disinfection →

- > What is its contact time? (How long does it take to kill the pathogens?)

- > Does it need rinsing?

- > Does it work in the presence of organic matter (such as soil or manure)?

A 99.9% kill rate means that 1,000 out of 1,000,000 bacteria survive (1 per 1,000).

A 99.999% kill rate means that only 10 out of 1,000,000 bacteria survive (1 per 100,000).

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Read the safety data sheet!

The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is a document that provides comprehensive information about the composition, health effects, and environmental impacts of a disinfectant. It also contains guidance on the safe handling, use, storage, and disposal of the product. If you employ staff, you are legally required to have copies of all SDS's printed out in the office, to grab and take to hospital if needed!

- Does the disinfectant come as a powder or liquid? Powders that need diluting in water can dry back to a powder on the surfaces you have disinfected and potentially be released back into the environment. If inhaled, these may harm the health of horses or humans.
- How does the disinfectant affect the environment? Is it safe to be washed down the drain? Will it harm aquatic life? Do spillages need to be contained and disposed of in line with local authority guidelines? Inappropriate disposal of disinfectant may be illegal as well as unethical.

The disinfectant you choose should be suitable for use on surfaces, equipment and clothing and to add to washing machines when needed too. It is important to know whether you need to rinse off disinfectant once the required contact time has passed before equipment can be used by people and animals, especially items used for eating and drinking.

Choose a non-corrosive disinfectant that won't damage equipment such as tools and metal barrows. Be especially careful that the disinfectant won't damage materials used in the floor of your trailer or horsebox. Regular inspections of the floor under any mats is vital.

Always use disinfectant according to the product guidelines. These include the dilution rate, when to replace or top up to prevent loss of potency, and expiry dates on packaging. Using ineffective disinfectant simply compromises your biosecurity efforts.

Some disinfectants can be compatible with other products but, as a rule, you shouldn't mix disinfectants. Seek advice if you have different products for different roles on your yard.

More Information:

If in doubt, look at the manufacturer's website and/or contact them for advice. You can also speak to your vet or a professional biosecurity company.

Remember...

By researching the right disinfectant(s) for your yard, you should save money by only buying products that are safe and effective for your needs, both routinely and in a possible outbreak situation.

Top Tip!

Keep a separate knapsack or spraying device for your disinfectant, don't use containers that have held other chemicals, especially weedkillers. Not only might this cause an unknown chemical reaction, but it could also be harmful to you and your horse's health.



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