

Understanding Sanitizing

There have been many questions and myths surrounding non-alcohol sanitizer. Below we will answer most of the questions and help uncover the truth about non-alcohol sanitizer below:

Below is a clip from www.flu.gov covering their view on non-alcohol sanitizers.

- Influenza may spread via contaminated hands or inanimate objects that become contaminated with influenza viruses. CDC recommends that students and staff be encouraged to wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective at killing flu germs, but may not be allowed in all schools. **If soap and water are not available, and alcohol-based products are not allowed in the school, other hand sanitizers that do not contain alcohol may be useful** however, there is less evidence on their effectiveness compared to that on hand washing and alcohol-based sanitizers.
 - In regards to the last comment, "there is less evidence on their effectiveness compared to that on hand washing and alcohol-based sanitizers" non-alcohol sanitizers have proven efficacy and safety data as shown in RFS 909. The efficacy claims are identical to alcohol sanitizer while non-alcohol removes the risk of flammability.

How are active ingredients approved for use or sale in the United States?

- The FDA is the overall governing body that approves active ingredients for use in healthcare facilities and for public use. Active ingredients that are commonly known are PCMX, Triclosan, and CHG. It is important to note that in the world of hand hygiene, the way that products are formulated is critical to the overall efficacy of the product. Symmetry uses a surfactant, allantoin, benzalkonium chloride blend that achieves efficacy that is unbeatable and safe. The approval from the FDA to use benzalkonium chloride as an antiseptic in skin preparations can be found in the following FDA register:
 - **The FDA, as the governing body to the CDC, approved the use of BAC as an active and this ruling remains in effect through today.**
FDA Federal Register/Vol. 56, No. 140 approved Benzalkonium Chloride.

Is Benzalkonium Chloride safe for use as an antiseptic on skin?

- Regarding safety of benzalkonium chloride, it is extremely safe at the low levels that we are using and it shows in the testing on RFS 909. The irritation and sensitization testing had zero incidents of irritation. Benzalkonium chloride has been used in many preparations for the past 60 years including eye and nasal drops, leave-on skin antiseptics, hygienic towelettes, and wet wipes. It is extremely safe and tested to be true.

What is the view of CDC regarding non-alcohol hand sanitizers?

- At this point the only product that has been recommended is an alcohol-based product. The key word is "recommended". The CDC does not approve products for use. They simply make recommendations. The FDA is responsible for approving active ingredients and setting protocols for products that will be used by the public and also in healthcare facilities. Symmetry Non-Alcohol Foaming Hand Sanitizer follows the FDA TFM protocols for hand hygiene products. It has shown similar, and in some cases, greater efficacy than alcohol-based hand sanitizers and is safer for the healthcare worker and the public. The best example I can give is bleach. The CDC recommends the use of bleach in every situation. If that is the case there would be no use for quaternary or phenolic disinfectants. In healthcare and school settings phenolics and quats are widely used due to the overall efficacy and safety for workers, patients, and the public.

This is a response to a concerned parent, from the CDC, regarding their position on non-alcohol hand sanitizer.

- **Subject:** RE: Hand sanitizers in schools

Thank you for your inquiry to CDC-INFO. In response to your request for information on hand hygiene in schools, we are pleased to provide you with the following information.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides recommendations for the prevention and control of diseases, please note that CDC is not a regulatory agency and does not have the legal authority to force responsible parties to take corrective action. CDC relies on its public health partners at the local and state level to address and solve environmental health problems and issues in their local area. If you have further concerns with hand sanitation in your school, we recommend you contact your state health department for guidance. Contact information for the different state health departments can be found online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html>

Though the scientific evidence is not as extensive as that on hand washing and alcohol-based sanitizers, **other hand sanitizers that do not contain alcohol may also be useful for killing flu germs on hands.**

For more information about hand hygiene and the H1N1 flu, please visit the CDC website:

H1N1 Flu and You

<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/qa.htm>

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Key Facts about H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/key_facts.htm

Thank you for contacting CDC-INFO Contact Center. Please do not hesitate to call 1-800-CDC-INFO, e-mail cdcinfo@cdc.gov or visit <http://www.cdc.gov> if you have any additional questions.

CDC-INFO is a service of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). This service is provided by Vangent, Inc. under contract to CDC and ATSDR.

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