

# How to make your own hand sanitizer at home

April 21 2020, by Lisa Boone

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

When it comes to protecting yourself from the novel coronavirus, you already know what to do: Stay home and keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds—and keep your hands away from your face.

But what happens when you have to leave the house to go grocery shopping or pump gas and don't have access to soap and [water](#)?

Hand sanitizer is the next best option, although health officials stress that it's not a replacement for washing your hands with soap and water.

That hasn't stopped the demand for [hand sanitizer](#), which has flown off store shelves much like bottled water and toilet paper. The demand has been so great, in fact, that EBay has forbid the sale of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes in the wake of egregious price gouging.

With hand disinfectant difficult to find, people are now making their own, thanks to a variety of recipes and tutorials available online and on YouTube.

So if you can't find hand sanitizer, don't panic. The World Health Organization has published a recipe and step-by-step guide online, (originally made available to help countries with [limited resources](#) to [clean water](#) and towels) with ingredients you may already have in your medicine cabinet:

The WHO formula for DIY hand sanitizer

- 1 cup of 99.8% isopropyl alcohol
  - 1 tablespoon of 3% hydrogen peroxide
  - 1 teaspoon of 98% glycerin
  - cup of sterile distilled water or boiled water that has cooled
1. Pour the alcohol into a glass container.

2. Add hydrogen peroxide.
3. Add glycerin and stir vigorously to combine as it is much thicker than alcohol and hydrogen peroxide.
4. Add sterilized water or the cooled boiled water and stir.
5. Pour into spray bottles.
6. Let the bottles rest for 72 hours. This will kill any bacteria that might be present, especially if you are reusing the containers.

That's it.

For hand sanitizer to be effective, the CDC recommends an overall content of least 60% alcohol. That means that if you make your own formula with 70% isopropyl alcohol instead of 99%, your do-it-yourself hand [sanitizer](#) won't be strong enough to fight COVID-19. (You can also use ethanol in place of isopropyl alcohol, but it must be at least 180 proof).

The formula is simple, but the ingredients are in short supply. My neighborhood Walgreens had glycerine in stock Sunday, but was sold out of rubbing [alcohol](#) and hydrogen peroxide. The items were also sold out at CVS. Don't presume the ingredients will be at the store if you see them online as the availability was not accurate. A Walgreens employee said the items have been in great demand due to the interest in home-brewed [hand](#) sanitizers but are generally restocked three times a week. So if you want to make your own formula, it may require some patience.

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