



Human Research Participant Protection Program

Cleaning Devices/Objects that Contact Intact Skin¹

Some research procedures require participants to share the use of objects or devices that don't penetrate the skin, such as computers, computer mice, phones or tablets, writing instruments, pedometers, eye trackers, etc. In general, unless the participants have known communicable diseases, exposed broken skin or skin allergies, it is neither practical nor necessary to chemically disinfect these objects between uses. However we recommend following common hygiene practices when sharing these objects between participants:

- Where possible, sheath the object in a plastic sleeve, especially if the object is made of porous material such as wood, cannot be cleaned properly or there is prolonged contact with skin.
- Encourage participants to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry them before and after using the objects, or offer a hand sanitizer for use
- If participants have minor cuts or wounds in the area that will be in contact with the object, have them wear a band-aid or another similar protective cover
- Wipe off any obvious fluids, such as perspiration, between uses
- Periodically wipe the object clean with alcohol wipes
- If the object is made of a fabric, sponge or similar absorbent material, wash/laundry between uses with the highest temperature water allowed
- If reasonable, have the participants wear disposable gloves or other personal protective equipment
- *Note: dispose of sheaths or gloves per [EHS Lab Safety Disposal Guidance](#)*
- If using blood pressure cuffs, wrap the cuffs over a shirt sleeve or another appropriate material. If that is not possible, wipe the inside of the cuffs clean with alcohol wipes and dry it before use, and wash periodically using manufacturer's instructions
- If using an object that uses a liquid gel (such as an ultrasound), sheath the object in a plastic sleeve, wipe off the gel and use fresh gel for each participant. If not possible to sheath the object, wipe it with an alcohol wipe or following manufacturer's instructions
- If you think an object needs to be disinfected, due to frequent touching or potential contamination,² use an EHS-approved **chemical disinfectant to sanitize objects** after each use as follows:
 - 70-90% ethanol
 - 1:100 household bleach (or Clorox Bleach Wipes) OR a quaternary ammonium compound such as Cavicide or Virex 11/256 (follow product label for use-dilution)

¹ If your research involves using devices or procedures that penetrate the skin or come into contact with a mucous membrane (such as saliva, blood or genital fluids) or if your participant population comprises people with known allergies or skin injuries, contact an IRB Administrator or Biosafety Officer for further guidance.

² For more information, review the [CDC Guidelines for Disinfection and Sterilization of Healthcare Facilities, 2008](#)

Questions?