

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Directorate General of Health Services
(EMR Division)

Advisory against spraying of disinfectant on people for COVID-19 management

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has received many queries regarding the efficacy (if any) of use disinfectants such as Sodium hypochlorite spray used over the individuals to disinfect them. The strategy seems to have gained a lot of media attention and is also being reportedly used at local levels in certain districts/local bodies.

Purpose of the document

To examine the merit of using disinfectants as spray over human body to disinfect them from COVID-19 and to provide appropriate advisory

Disinfectants are chemicals that destroy disease causing pathogens or other harmful microorganisms. It refers to substances applied on inanimate objects owing to their strong chemical properties.

Chemical disinfectants are recommended for cleaning and disinfection only of frequently touched areas/surfaces by those who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Precautionary measures are to be adopted while using disinfectants for cleaning – like wearing gloves during disinfection.

In view of the above, the following advisory is issued:

- Spraying of individuals or groups is **NOT recommended** under any circumstances. Spraying an individual or group with chemical disinfectants is physically and psychologically harmful.
- Even if a person is potentially exposed with the COVID-19 virus, spraying the external part of the body does not kill the virus that has entered your body. Also there is no scientific evidence to suggest that they are effective even in disinfecting the outer clothing/body in an effective manner.
- Spraying of chlorine on individuals can lead to irritation of eyes and skin and potentially gastrointestinal effects such as nausea and vomiting. Inhalation of sodium hypochlorite can lead to irritation of mucous membranes to the nose, throat, respiratory tract and may also cause bronchospasm.
- Additionally use of such measures may in fact lead to a false sense of disinfection & safety and actually hamper public observance to hand washing and social distancing measures.