

How to Safely Clean Your Android Phone

by Suzanne Kantra on March 17, 2020

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Coronavirus and other germs move easily between surfaces like the ATM machine or the pole on the bus, where [they can live anywhere from hours to more than a week](#), and your phone. And once germs reach your phone, it's inevitable that they'll reach your face. Americans [check their phones every 10 minutes](#), or 96 times per day, and most [people touch their face more than 20 times per hour](#), with nearly half of those touches making contact with the eyes, nose or mouth. That's how you could become infected.

While it's hard to stop touching your face, it's easy to keep your Android phone clean (and check out our instructions on [how to clean your iPhone here](#)).

How to clean your phone the right way

1. Unplug your phone
2. Remove your phone case
3. Remove any visible dirt and grime

You can wash off—don't submerge—your phone if you have a water-resistant model (Look for an IP rating of at least IPX7.) If you don't have a water resistant model or you're not sure of your phone's water-resistance rating, wipe it down with a dampened soft cloth. Make sure you don't get water in the ports.

4. Disinfect with an approved antimicrobial wipe

In general, phone and screen protector manufacturers will tell you to stay away from using alcohol and other disinfecting wipes. That's because, over time, these wipes can wear away the oleophobic (oil-repellent) coating, the thin glaze that makes your screen more fingerprint resistant and gives it that smooth feel. The reality is that the coating will wear away over time anyway unless you use a screen protector.

Samsung (for its Galaxy phones), Google (for its Pixel phones) and Zagg (for its [Invisible Shield screen protectors](#)) have all gone on the record saying that you can use 70% isopropyl alcohol wipes, which the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) says should be effective in disinfecting surfaces. Samsung says you can also use "[a hypochlorous acid-based solution \(containing 50-80ppm\)](#)" and Google and Zagg say you can use Clorox disinfecting wipes, which are on the EPA's list of "[products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogen claims](#)," i.e. COVID-19.. LG and others have not provided comment yet. If your phone manufacturer has not provided guidance on disinfecting your phone, it's still most likely fine to use the 70% isopropyl alcohol wipes because most phone manufacturers use the same sources for their screens.

Alternatively, you could put an [Invisible Shield screen protector](#) on your phone (starts at under \$20, check price on [Amazon](#)) or invest in a water-resistant case that fully encloses your phone, like [Otterbox Defender](#) (starting under \$50, check price on [Amazon](#)) and [Lifeproof Fre](#) (starting under \$60, check price on [Amazon](#)), which you can clean with alcohol or disinfecting wipes, as well as soapy water.

5. Clean the remaining crevices with a cotton swab dipped in a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution

Use a cotton swab dipped in a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution to clean around buttons, the edges of your phone's screen protector, the camera lenses and any other edge or crevice where dirt can build up. Make sure the swab is damp, not dripping, with the solution.

6. Clean your phone case

Clean your phone case according to the manufacturer's instructions. In many cases, a good cleaning with soap and water or wiping down with one of antimicrobial wipes above will both clean and sanitize. Make sure you wait until the case is fully dry before putting it back on your phone.

6 things you should never do to clean your Android phone

Don't clean your phone while it's plugged in.

Don't pour a cleaning solution directly on your phone. Spray it onto a cloth.

Don't use anything other than a soft microfiber cloth to clean your phone.

Don't use bleach, window cleaner, kitchen cleaners and other abrasive cleaners.

Don't use undiluted dish soap, hand soap or vinegar.

Don't use compressed air.