

Let's Talk About Cleaning Sunbeds

By Brenda Fishbaugh

In the April issue of *IST Magazine*, I wrote about using proper tanning bed disinfectants and not substituting solutions that leave residues that are potentially damaging to acrylic surfaces or a tanner's skin, and that simply don't meet disinfection standards. I hope you also remember that the product required to be used after every tanner is properly called a "disinfectant." A bed "cleaner" is actually more of a polish, meant to buff out scratches on acrylics, shine handles and get into the tiny corners – best used for weekly equipment detailing.

For many salons, this is a typically slower time of year – a good time to do some deep cleaning. So, now that I've convinced you to use proper hospital-grade disinfectants made specifically for cleaning sunbeds, I'd like to cover *how* to do it properly.

First, make sure you mix disinfectant solution properly. I can't tell you how many salons I've been in that just add more concentrate to "make it better!" It doesn't make solution better; it makes it strong enough to irritate a tanner's skin! It's critical that you mix disinfectant to the exact label specs.

Second, you must check your solution with a quaternary ("quat") test strip. These are litmus paper rolls, similar to what is used to test pool water. Sunbed disinfectants require specific ratios based on their ingredients. For example, the tanning industry's leading disinfectant, Lucasol, should be mixed at 700ppm.

Third, use a fresh towel to disinfect each bed. Here's a tanning horror story: I was training a salon team and noticed a towel draped over a bottle of disinfectant. They used that towel on EVERY BED, all day long. Terrifying! Tingle products, sweat (and whatever else) being smeared from one sunbed acrylic to the next. I don't need to say it ... don't do this.

Robert Urfer of Lucas Products, makers of Lucasol Tanning Bed Disinfectant, says, "Spray the solution on the acrylic and wait 60 seconds." He says it takes that long to sanitize the acrylic – don't just spray and wipe! "Waiting 60 seconds sanitizes and kills 99.9% of fungus and germs. So, spray the acrylic, then empty the wastebasket, wipe the door handle and mop the floor, and *then* wipe the bed

surface with a fresh towel." Your evening routine should be to spray and wait ten minutes to disinfect. "This kills 100% of the viruses and other stuff you don't want on your bed, and needs to be done at least once a day," Robert adds.

Finally, solution needs to be made fresh daily and tested with a quat strip. Don't mix huge quantities to use for several days – it will lose its efficacy quickly.

As I mentioned in my April "Eye to Eye" column, all disinfectants are not created equal. Check labels thoroughly and make sure you use a product that provides a clean tanning surface and takes the best possible care of your acrylics.

Want to know more? Lucas Products offers a free, 20-minute online course on salon disinfection! If you pass the quiz, you get a certificate to hang in your salon. Visit lucasproducts.com/lucasol-certification-signup to take the course.

Protecting the health of your tanners is your responsibility, and proper sanitizing and disinfection are critical parts of providing a clean and healthy tanning experience. ■



About the Author:

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