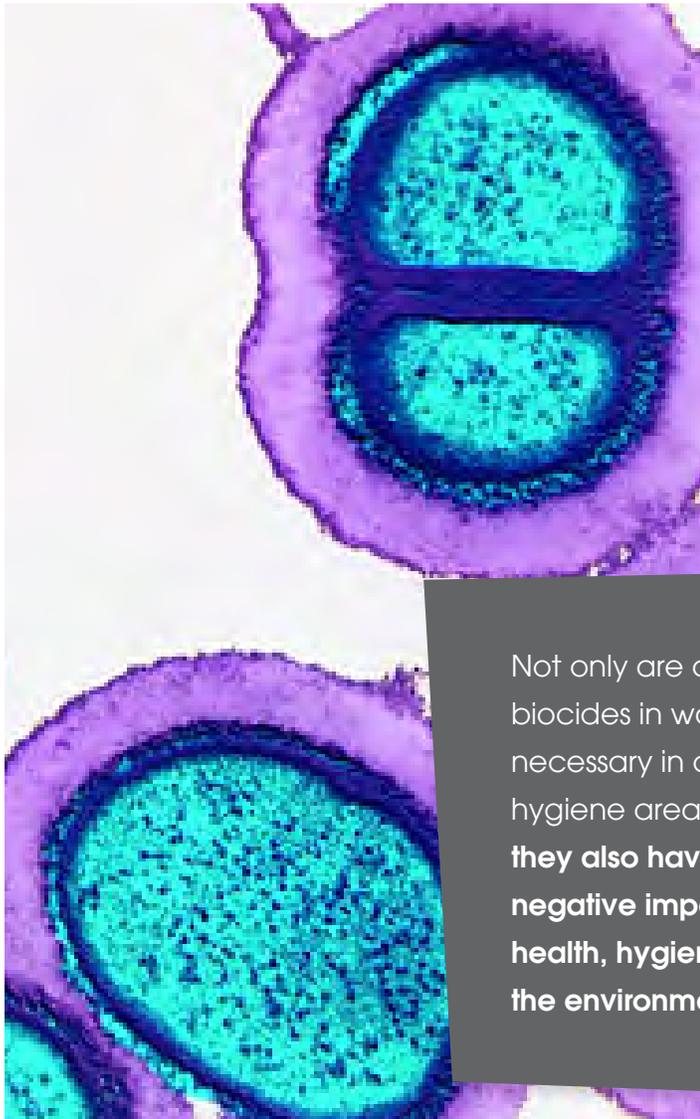




# Going biocide-free

## Good hygiene is in your hands



Not only are current biocides in walls not necessary in critical hygiene areas – **they also have a negative impact on health, hygiene and the environment.**

Biocides and antimicrobials have historically been introduced to products to help prevent the growth of microbes on surfaces, especially in environments that need to maintain strict levels of hygiene, such as hospitals and food production areas.

Tests prove the current biocides, particularly silver, are no more effective than the physical removal of microbes from walls and floors. Silver biocides can take up to two hours to completely eradicate microbes on a surface, giving a false sense of security and endangering health. Additionally, walls have minimal exposure to microbes, making it unnecessary to include biocides in these surfaces.

A good cleaning regime, which is essential in any environment where hygiene is of concern, can keep walls and floors clean without risking the spread of microbes.

In the United States, where legislation in different states has limited or even banned the use of biocides, improvements in hygiene have actually led to a decrease in healthcare acquired infections.

By improving cleaning regimes, health and hygiene can be assured without relying on biocides.

Not only are current biocides in walls not necessary in critical hygiene areas – they also have a negative impact on health, hygiene and the environment.

# Negative impact of biocides

- Health
- Hygiene
- Environment

## Health

1. Research shows that the overuse of antimicrobials contributes to antimicrobial resistance.
2. Research shows biocides actually help microbes become resistant to common antimicrobials.
3. We are at a critical point with antibiotic resistance increasing. No alternatives have been developed that can effectively counter this problem. By using biocides so frequently, there is a concern that we may be making the situation worse.

## Hygiene

1. Biocides used in walls, particularly silver, have not been clinically shown to be more effective than the physical removal of microbes in cleaning.
2. Studies show silver ion technology can take up to two hours to eradicate microbes on a surface.
3. Silver ion technology does not activate in dry environments, including most healthcare environments, and is therefore ineffective.
4. Tests conducted by the University of Southampton into standard testing methodology of biocides have shown that high temperatures and humidity levels which are not found in indoor environments are used when biocides are shown to be effective.
5. Bacteria will not grow on dry walls, so biocides are unnecessary in most critical hygiene areas.



6. People have minimal exposure to microbes on floors and walls— biocides should be concentrated on high risk areas (elevator buttons, door handles, etc.).
7. A good cleaning regime that removes the microbes is the most effective way to ensure hygiene criteria are met, even in critical hygiene areas.

## Environment

1. Common biocides are associated with environmental contamination.
2. There is concern that common biocides such as silver may be dangerous to human health.
3. Silver is toxic to aquatic animals.
4. The overuse and reliance on silver for hygiene is bad for the environment .



**Tests prove that the current biocides, particularly silver, are no more effective than the physical removal of microbes from walls and floors**

## Independent University study endorses Altro research

We have been studying the effectiveness of biocides for many years. Back in 2012, Altro decided that the inclusion of biocides could be discontinued in its resilient flooring ranges without reducing hygiene performance. For the last three years we have focused on studying the use of biocides in wall cladding.

Our test results showed biocides needed moisture to activate, and could take up to two hours to completely remove microbes. We commissioned an independent university study into biocide efficacy; the results endorsed our research. Therefore, we no longer include biocides in our hygienic wall cladding and vinyl flooring.

We are committed to providing customers with the best products for their needs. Therefore we will continue to research new biocides. If a safe, effective and environmentally-friendly alternative

to those currently available is found, we will consider including it in our products.

In the meantime, rest assured that our product solutions are designed for hygiene in a biocide-free environment.

**Altro products still provide superior hygiene performance without the inclusion of biocides.**

Altro Whiterock hygienic wall cladding provides a smooth, impervious, grout-free and impact-resistant surface that makes keeping surfaces safe and hygienic easy. We believe the use of a thorough cleaning regime on impervious surfaces such as Altro Whiterock hygienic wall cladding and supporting good hand hygiene will go far to help keep people safe and healthy.

**Remember, good hygiene is in your hands.**

