Keeping a vehicle's interior free of harmful germs and other unwanted elements is simple and important. Use these helpful tips for any vehicle that you plan to drive.

Focus on these 12 high-touch areas

Use a clean cloth and soap or disinfecting wipes on the surfaces you touch the most: key and remote fob, exterior door handles, trunk lid or liftgate grab area, interior door pull start button, rearview mirror, vents, gear selector, center stack knobs, seat belt and buckle (avoid harsh cleaners on the belt itself, lest they degrade the fibers and belt's strength) and parking brake release.

Disinfect the cup holders

Some cup holders have small crevices that can be hard to reach with a cleaning rag. If removable, a cup holder can be taken out and run through a dishwasher. If not, dipping a cotton swab in cleaning solution then swiping small areas works just as well.

Store reusable bags and other personal items elsewhere

Reusable bags used to carry food may come into contact with bacteria. Avoid cross-contamination and store these items in a clean, dry location – not in the trunk of your car.

Carry a disinfectant kit

Consider equipping yourself and / or your vehicle with a disinfectant kit (wipes, spray, hand sanitizer, etc.) so that the vehicle and your hands can be cleaned, accordingly. This is especially important for those in shared-vehicle situations such as rentals and pools.

