

Colleges make sanitizers in their labs

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Kochi: With the scarcity of hand sanitizers becoming a challenge in fighting Covid-19, many educational institutions in the city have started making sanitizers on their own, for use within the campus, using ethanol or isopropanol (rubbing alcohol) in their laboratories. Institutes have taken the initiative after the state health department launched Break the Chain campaign that envisages promotion of hygiene habits and mandatory hand-washing at public places, offices and educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the chemistry teachers of Maharaja's College have gone one step ahead and are making sanitizers in bulk quantity to supply to Government Medical College, Ernakulam, district tourism promotion council and NGOs.

"After the launch of Break the Chain campaign, we got directives from officials to use



Teachers of Maharaja's College prepare hand sanitizers on Tuesday

hand sanitizers inside classrooms, exam halls and public access points in the college. We make sanitizers in our labs based on guidelines published by World Health Organization (WHO). But after seeing the Facebook post of our work, medical college students approached with request for sanitizers. We have made around 80 litres of sanitizers," said Julie Chandra, a chemistry teacher and NSS programme officer of the college.

As ethanol's availability and price is a challenge, most institutions are using isopropanol, which is an alternative suggested by the WHO. "A 100ml bottle of sanitizer we make contains 80% isopropanol, 17% hydrogen peroxide and 3% glycerol. In order to give fragrance, we also add lemongrass essence. Now we have received orders from DTPC and NGO union. We will be making sanitizers for them in the coming days. We only

charge the material cost," said Chandira.

St Albert's College, Sacred Heart (SH) College, Thevara, and Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) are also making sanitizers. "We have made around five litres of sanitizers for the college's use," said Jinu George, a chemistry teacher at SH college.

St Albert's College makes pocket-sized bottles of sanitizers, named Break the Chain, with each having a capacity of 20ml. "We are looking for spray-type bottles to fill the sanitizers," said MA Solomon, HOD, chemistry department, St Albert's.

Cusat vice-chancellor K N Madhusoodanan said the sanitizers they make would be made available to nearby schools where board exams are going on. K Girish Kumar, head of applied chemistry department, Cusat, said the production cost of a 100ml bottle will come to around Rs 75.