

A guide to understanding germs!

How much do you really know, and admit to knowing, about bacteria in your environment?



At the office ...

A recent study shows a significant number of germs can live in the workplace, making it one of the dirtiest environments you can encounter.

OFFICE TIP #1
Other people's equipment
Wash hands after touching shared equipment, such as pens, staplers and fax or copy machines.

OFFICE TIP #2
Desk clutter
Keep clutter to a minimum, and keep desktops crumb-free to prevent the spread of food-borne bacteria.

OFFICE TIP #3
The phone receiver
Disinfect the receiver and buttons, especially if used by more than one person.

OFFICE TIP #4
The keyboard
One of the dirtiest objects in the workplace. Clean keys regularly, especially if others use it.

WHAT'S THIS?
Areas with high levels of contamination

58 percent

of employers do not encourage hand washing

47 percent

of office workers wash their hands five times or less daily

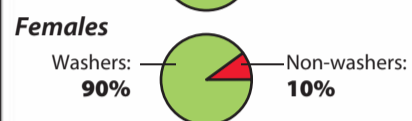
\$1.3 billion

is what Americans spend annually on medical costs related to the flu

Washing hands: Who really does it?

A 2005 survey by the American Microbiological Society found that one in five people do not wash their hands, despite having said they did.

At major public attractions, 2005



But compared with a similar survey conducted at major airports in 2003, more people are washing their hands after using the restroom.

At major airport restrooms, 2003



When to wash hands?

The 2005 survey found that women acknowledge washing their hands after certain activities more than men.

After using a public restroom



After using your bathroom



After changing a diaper



Before handling or eating food



After petting a dog or cat



After coughing or sneezing



After handling money



ABOUT THE SURVEYS: In 2005, American Society for Microbiology and The Soap and Detergent Association had more than 1,000 people surveyed by telephone from Aug. 19 to Aug. 22, while more than 6,000 people were observed in public restrooms at six major public attractions in Atlanta, Chicago, New York City and San Francisco. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

In 2003, they conducted a similar survey by observing more than 7,500 people at major airports in Chicago, Dallas, New York City, Miami and San Francisco. The margin of error for the 2003 survey was not available.

BATH TIP #1
Clean and disinfect toilets, sinks and tubs to kill germs, as well as mold and mildew that can cause allergies.

BATH TIP #2
Germs, such as staph, can also live on mirrors, sinks and doorknobs. Be sure to clean these regularly.

KITCHEN TIP #1
Trash cans are the perfect breeding ground for germs and bacteria. Clean and disinfect regularly.

KITCHEN TIP #2
Cutting boards Use one board for cutting meat and another for vegetables to help prevent cross-contamination.

KITCHEN TIP #3
Sinks & sponges Dishes soaking in water for too long causes a soup of bacteria. Also, disinfect sponges after each use.

WHAT'S THIS?
Areas with high levels of contamination

... At the house

Think the bathroom is the dirtiest place in a house? Think again. Studies show that up to 80 percent of food poisoning starts in the kitchen, where germs have plenty of places to hide.

The Super Solution: Wash your hands

With all the constant contact with germs, health officials say the best preventative measure against sickness is to wash hands five times or more a day.

STEP 1
Wet hands with warm, running water before reaching for soap.

STEP 2
Rub hands together to create a lather, washing both the front and back of hands. Rinse well with warm water.

STEP 3
Dry hands thoroughly. Hand sanitizers or wipes are a good alternative if soap and water are unavailable.

20 SECONDS
Experts agree that's all you need to kill germs during washing.

POWER IN WASHING
Germs can spread on everything you touch. Some viruses can live up to two hours on tables and desks.

Food: Hands can transfer germs from meat and eggs to other items.

Pets: Dog and cat saliva contain 100 types of germs.

DID YOU KNOW?
Almost 50 percent of all food-borne illnesses can be attributed to poor hand-washing.

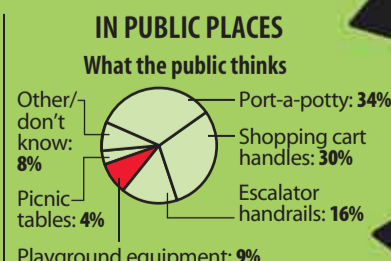
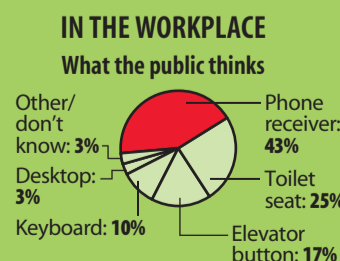
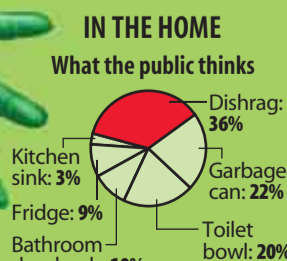
DON'T FORGET
Scrub under fingernails, too!

WHEN TO WASH:

- After using the restroom.
- After scanning newspapers or magazines.
- Before and after eating.

The germiest things

In 2004, the University of Arizona conducted a survey of 1,000 people and discovered most people do not know where the most germ-infected places are located.



SOURCES: American Society for Microbiology; The Soap and Detergent Association; The University of Arizona; StopGerms.org and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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