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Germ Prevention



Spread joy — not germs — during the holiday season

The holiday season should be about sharing fun times with friends and family — not about spreading the flu virus and other illnesses. If you're planning a holiday party, keep your guests healthy by:

- Having hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes available for guests to use after shaking hands.
- Stocking up on antibacterial hand soap and single-use, disposable hand towels in bathrooms.
- Not offering food or beverage from a communal bowl. You don't want guests dipping their cups into the punch bowl or grabbing handfuls of chips or nuts from a bowl. For items such as these, use separate utensils such as ladles, spoons, or tongs for every dish. Replace the utensils often throughout the party.
- Serving as much of the food as possible in individual containers. Use mini muffin papers, cupcake papers, toothpicks, and skewers. You want to avoid having guests touch any food except what they intend to eat.

Germs are everywhere. Viruses last several hours on surfaces, while bacteria can last for weeks.

Germ fighting tips that may surprise you

- Take your shoes off and put them on a rack or in a closet nearest the door where you enter the house. Germs, allergens, and other contaminants collect on shoes and can be tracked throughout your house.
- Keep your toothbrush and toothpaste in the medicine cabinet. Flushing the toilet disperses microbes as far away as six feet, and many of them collect in the bathroom sink.
- Avoid putting your purse on the kitchen counter or on any surface where food is prepared or eaten. Researchers have found that purse bottoms can contain more than 10,000 bacteria per square inch.
- Use the end stalls in public bathrooms. The middle stalls harbor the most bacteria.
- Frequently clean your cell phone and your hands-free headphones or Bluetooth headset with an alcohol swab to remove bacteria.

Source: The University of Arizona



After the last snuffle or cough

You may not be sick or contagious anymore, but your germs from two days prior (when you were sick) could still be alive.

Germs can live on objects for up to 48 hours, depending on the germ and its environment. If healthy people touch an infected surface, then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth, they could get sick, too. Here's what you can do:

- **Wipe all surfaces** such as bedside tables, books, bathroom and kitchen counters, toilets, phones, other hand-held electronics, toys, doorknobs, faucets, teapots, and the refrigerator handle with a household disinfectant. Don't forget your computer keyboard.
- **Wash linens with laundry soap**, and then tumble dry on a hot setting. Don't put dirty laundry near your face. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds after handling dirty laundry or used tissues.
- **Toss disposable personal care items** such as your toothbrush, disposable contact lenses, razor blades, and mascara.

“There is no curing a sick man who believes himself to be in health.”

— Henri Amiel

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



STOP Germs in the office

Clean your workspace items every day with a disinfectant wipe containing bleach or a soft cloth soaked in alcohol or a mild soap solution.

Cold and flu viruses can survive for up to three days on computer keyboards, pens, staplers, and other common desktop items. On average, office workers can touch up to 300 different surfaces in 30 minutes, according to a University of Arizona Public Health Study.

Staying healthy at the gym

Before you start your weight-training or yoga class, remember that germs can thrive on exercise equipment in moist, sweaty environments.

Disinfect weights, handles, bars, and benches before you use them and afterwards as a courtesy to others. If your health club doesn't already provide spray bottles of disinfecting solution and towels or disposable disinfectant wipes, ask for them.

Consider bringing your own mat for yoga and other exercise classes. Also wear flip-flops or sandals in the shower to protect against fungus infections like athlete's foot.

Source: International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association

Handshake alternatives that germs don't like

Greetings and goodbyes can be germ-transferring fests when handshakes are involved. Be polite and avoid potential problems by using other gestures.

- **Fist bump:** You and the other person form closed fists with one hand and then lightly tap your fists together — either knuckles to knuckles or one fist on top of the other.
- **Use the Namaste greeting:** Press your own hands together, palms touching and fingers pointing upward, thumbs close to the chest. Then, bow forward slightly.
- **Give a thumbs up** • **Flash the peace sign** • **Smile and nod** • **Bow**

Carry a small container of hand sanitizer, and use it after those times when nothing other than a handshake will do.

