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Don't Touch That!

8 Ways to Protect Yourself from Germs in Public Places

A recent AARP Newsletter carried an article from *Prevention.com* that was of great interest. AARP suggested that we share it with friends, so here it is.

Beware of these locations and surfaces

On average, an adult can touch as many as 30 objects within a minute, including germ-harboring, high-traffic surfaces such as light switches, doorknobs, phone receivers and remote controls. At home, you do all you can to keep germs at bay. But what happens when you go out to dinner, do some grocery shopping or visit the doctor's office? If you know where germs are most likely to lurk, you can protect yourself.

1. Restaurant Menus

Have you ever seen anyone wash a menu? Probably not. A study in the *Journal of Medical Virology* reported that cold and flu viruses can survive for 18 hours on hard surfaces. If it's a popular restaurant, hundreds of people could be handling the menus—and passing their germs on to you. Never let a menu touch your plate or silverware, and be sure to wash your hands after you place your order.



2. Lemon Wedges

According to a 2007 study in the *Journal of Environmental Health*, nearly 70 percent of the lemon wedges perched on the rims of restaurant glasses contain disease-causing microbes. When the researchers ordered drinks at 21 different restaurants, they found 25 different



microorganisms lingering on the 76 lemons they secured, including *E. coli* and other fecal bacteria. Tell your server that you'd prefer your beverage sans fruit. Why risk it?

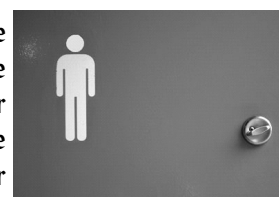
3. Condiment Dispensers

It's the rare eatery that regularly cleans its condiment containers. And the reality is that many people don't wash their hands before eating, says Kelly Reynolds, Ph.D., a germs specialist and public health professor at the University of Arizona. So while you may be diligent, the guy who poured the ketchup before you may not have been, which means his germs are now on your fingers—and your fries. Squirt hand sanitizer on the outside of the condiment bottle or use a disinfectant wipe before you grab it.



4. Restroom Door Handles

Don't think you can escape the restroom without touching the door handle? Palm a spare paper towel after you wash up and use it to grasp the handle. Yes, other patrons may think you're a germ-phobe—but you'll never see them again, and you're the one who won't get sick.



5. Soap Dispensers

About 25 percent of public restroom dispensers are contaminated with fecal bacteria. Soap that harbors bacteria may seem ironic, but that's exactly what a

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Let's Talk

Dr. Christine Gonzalez

Now that Spring is upon us, we're enjoying longer days and lots of exciting events here at Uptown. We finally have our short video clip of Elvis on Valentine's Day up on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/UptownPharmacy2).

Speaking of the King, he was back for a second performance on Tax Day. Keep checking back on our Facebook page for more pictures, videos, and future fun events...

I'd like to focus the rest of this article on our newest supplement, Ocean's Blue Professional Omega-3. As more people are becoming aware of the importance of omega-3, many products are popping up on the market (some good and some not so good). Getting enough omega-3's in your diet through consumption of fish and/or supplements is key to keeping inflammation in check. Research suggests that this may be the root cause of many chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

We have read the research on Ocean's Blue Professional Omega-3 and we are impressed! This product is available only through pharmacy professionals and here are a few reasons why:

- Each softgel capsule contains 1050mg of DHA/EPA. Compare this to your current fish oil or even the prescription omega-3 with only 930mg per capsule. Not sure or need help? Just bring in your bottle of omega-3 and we'll compare it for you.
- Each batch undergoes quality assurance testing in a FDA registered facility in Florida, not overseas.
- And best of all...no fishy odor, aftertaste, or fish burps. Unfortunately, I know many of you have had a bad experience with lower quality products.

The American Heart Association recommends taking an omega-3 dietary supplement if you have documented coronary heart disease (CHD) or high triglycerides. For CHD, they suggest at least 1,000mg of EPA/DHA and for lowering your triglycerides, they suggest 2,000-4,000mg of EPA/DHA. In both cases, this should be under consultation with your physician. Then come to your knowledgeable Uptown pharmacist for your Ocean's Blue Professional Omega-3. We are 100% confident that you will be 100% satisfied!

We are happy to announce that the construction on the plaza out front is complete and hope you will stop by to relax in the new beautiful seating area. And don't forget to say hi to us at the store. We are always available to help with your wellness needs or for a unique gift. Remember that we have 50% off cards and many great items for Mother's Day. As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions, and most importantly smiles. Until next month....

Freckle Faders

If you like your freckles, there's no need to worry about them. Freckles are harmless pockets of the skin pigment melanin that become prominent on sun-exposed areas of the body. Abundant freckling does not mean that you will develop skin cancer, but it does suggest that your skin is sun-sensitive and your risk for skin cancer may be elevated. Use sunscreen, wear a wide-brimmed hat and limit exposure to midday sun to help prevent existing freckles from darkening, keep new freckles from developing and reduce your skin cancer risk. If any freckle or other spot looks strange—lumpy, scaly, reddish, unusually large—see your dermatologist.

Don't even think of rubbing lemon juice on freckles in an attempt to lighten them. This old folk "remedy" can make skin blister or break out in a rash when you're in the sun. Instead, try an over-the-counter fade cream, such as Ambi or Porcelana, with 2% hydroquinone...or a prescription 4% hydroquinone cream. These work by blocking the synthesis

of new melanin (not by bleaching existing spots)— so it may take several months of daily use for old melanin to migrate out through the natural process of exfoliation.

For faster and more thorough results, see your dermatologist for laser therapy. It works by using specific wavelengths of light to break down the melanin, which is then expelled from the surface and also carried away by your body's lymphatic system. Most people experience mild discomfort from the laser procedure, so your doctor may use a numbing cream on your skin before starting. Usually one session eliminates or substantially reduces existing freckles (though future sun exposure may create new ones). A session typically costs \$500 to \$1,500, depending on the size of the area treated, and generally is not covered by medical insurance.





Hints from JoAnn

KITCHEN HINTS

- To easily remove honey from a measuring spoon, first coat the spoon with nonstick cooking spray.
- Run your hands under cold water before pressing Rice Krispies treats in the pan—the marshmallow won't stick to your fingers.
- Mash and freeze ripe bananas, in one-cup portions, for use in later baking—no wasted bananas (or you can freeze them whole, peeled, in plastic baggies).
- To quickly use that frozen juice concentrate, simply mash it with a potato masher—no need to wait for it to thaw.
- To get the most juice out of fresh lemons, bring them to room temperature and roll them under your palm against the kitchen counter before squeezing.
- Spray your tupperware with non-stick cooking spray before pouring in tomato-based sauces—no more stains.
- Transfer your jelly to a small plastic squeeze bottle—no more messy, sticky jars or knives! This also works well for homemade salad dressing.
- Save your store-bought-bread bags and ties—they

make perfect storage bags for homemade bread.

- When a cake recipe calls for flouring the baking pan, use a bit of the dry cake mix instead—no white mess on the outside of the cake.
- Wrap celery in aluminum foil when putting in the refrigerator it will keep for weeks.
- When making bread, substitute non-dairy creamer for the dry milk—it works just as well! Rinse cooked, ground meat with water when draining off the fat—this helps "wash away" even more fat.
- Slicing meat when partially frozen makes it easier to get thin slices.
- Instead of throwing away bread heels or leftover cornbread, use them to make bread crumbs. For use later, store them in the freezer.
- Substitute half applesauce for the vegetable oil in your baking recipes—you'll greatly reduce the fat content! (Example: 1/2 cup vegetable oil = 1/4 cup applesauce + 1/4 cup oil).
- To ripen avocados and bananas, enclose them in a brown paper bag with an apple for 2-3 days.
- Brush beaten egg white over pie crust before baking to yield a beautiful, glossy finish.

Very Useful Web Sites

- **Move outdoors:** Plan walking/running routes with detailed aerial maps—or find routes that others have created. Routes include estimates of distance traveled and calories burned. www.WalkJogRun.net
- **Do it yourself:** Find out the steps involved in a home repair or improvement project. Then compare costs of using a professional versus doing it yourself. www.DIYorNot.com
- **Better vision:** Look up eye symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention. From the National Eye Institute at the National Institutes of Health. www.nei.nih.gov/health
- **Used-car lemon check:** Free service to determine whether a vehicle is an officially designated lemon. www.LemonCheck.com
- **Bargain finder:** Find out where you can get good deals on laptops, video games, TVs, cameras and more. www.SlickDeals.net

Uptown Drug & Gift Shop offers a large selection of both elegant and eclectic jewelry. Stop by to pick out that perfect gift of jewelry for someone special!



"My doctor told me to start my exercise program very gradually. Today I drove past a store that sells sweat pants."

(Continued from page 1)

University of Arizona study found. "Most of these containers are never cleaned, so bacteria grow as the soap scum builds up," says microbiologist Charles Gerba, Ph.D., who directed the study. "And the bottoms are touched by dirty hands, so there's a continuous culture feeding millions of bacteria." Be sure to scrub your hands thoroughly with plenty of hot water for 15 to 20 seconds—and if you happen to have an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, use that, too.



6. Grocery Carts

The handles of almost two-thirds of the shopping carts tested in a 2007 study at the University of Arizona were contaminated with fecal bacteria. In fact, the bacterial counts of the carts exceeded those of the average public restroom. To protect yourself: Swab the handle with a disinfectant wipe before grabbing hold (stores are starting to provide them, so look around for a dispenser). And while you're wheeling around the supermarket, skip the free food samples, which are nothing more than communal hand-to-germ-to-mouth zones.



7. Airplane Bathrooms

When microbiologist Charles Gerba, Ph.D., tested for microbes in the bathrooms of commercial jets, he found surfaces from faucets to doorknobs to be contaminated with *E. coli*. It's not surprising, then, that people often get sick after traveling by plane. Clean your hands thoroughly with a sanitizer and try not to directly touch the surfaces.



8. Doctors' Offices

A doctor's office is not the place to be if you're trying to avoid germs. To limit your exposure: Bring your own books and magazines (and toys, if you have your children or grandchildren with you) and pack your own tissues and hand sanitizers, which should have an alcohol content of at least 60 percent. If possible, in the waiting room, leave at least two chairs between you and the other patients to reduce your chances of picking up their bugs. Germ droplets from coughing and sneezing can travel about 3 feet before falling to the floor.



Women Need to Save More for Retirement Than Men

Women need to save more for retirement than men. Reason: After retirement, women live an average of 22 years, compared with 19 for men. Women must save an additional 2% a year for 30 years to make up for that difference. But: Women often start saving two to four years later than men do, on average, and women invest less—7.3% of earnings, compared with 8.1% for men. One-quarter of women do not contribute to company-sponsored retirement plans at a high enough level to take advantage of the company's matching funds.

Repaired Shoes Can Be Better Than New

Materials used in shoe repair often are three to four times better quality than ones used to manufacture shoes—even expensive shoes. Shoe-repair shops use the same high-quality materials on all shoes—better heels, soles and stitching. Shoes also can be completely reconditioned, which includes fixing torn or weakened areas, replacing worn-out parts and restoring color and finish. Simple repairs, such as new heels, usually cost around \$20. Reconditioning can cost \$100. This is well worth it for a pair of shoes that costs \$300, for example, because you would be getting virtually a new pair of shoes for a fraction of the cost.



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