

7 Germaphobe Habits Everyone Should Follow

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While some people can take things to the extreme, experts do agree that there are a few habits that everyone should consider to significantly lower your chances of getting ill.

- **Hold your breath when someone sneezes.** Every sneeze expels tiny droplets of germs that can lead to infection. You're directly in the line of fire when someone sneezes in your vicinity, and if that person had a cold, you're at risk of infection. If you hold your breath momentarily after someone with a cold sneezes, you can actually lower your chances of catching it. Additionally, the most common way of catching a cold is by touch. It's a good idea to wash your hands if you've been near someone who is sneezing.
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- **Wipe down your phone.** We all touch our phones off and on all day and regularly hold them near our faces after placing them on a variety of germ-y places. It is advised to clean your phone *at least once a week* with a disinfectant wipe to limit your exposure to unwanted bacteria.
 - **Clean your hands after pumping gas.** A slew of people touch gas pumps during the day and they are rarely cleaned, allowing dirt and bacteria to build up over time. Most gas stations have installed hand sanitizers near pumps and it is a good idea to sanitize your hands before touching your car door handle or steering wheel.
 - **Use a paper towel on public bathroom handles.** According to research from the University of Florida, faucets, soap dispensers, and door handles contain the most bacteria. Just think about how many people aren't washing their hands or at least aren't washing properly, before they grab the door handle. After washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the bathroom door.

- **Put down the toilet seat lid before flushing.** Public bathrooms aren't the only bathrooms that get germy – your bathroom at home can be a breeding ground for bacteria. Putting the lid down before you flush prevents water vapors and a microorganism known as “toilet plume” aerosols from shooting into the air.
- **Wash your hands the right way.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing your hands for a full 20 seconds (the amount of time it takes to hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice). Ensure that you wash the front and back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. This process helps remove surface germs, which stick around during a quick wash.
- **Clean the outside of your purse often.** If you think about it, your purse goes everywhere with you—restaurants, work, stores—and it often sits on desks, tables, and floors. Then, you bring your purse home and you may set it on the kitchen counter, table, or bed. If you sanitize the outside of your bag, you can prevent germs from transferring to surfaces at home. If you aren't able to sanitize the outside of your purse, be conscious of where you are setting your purse. Avoid setting your purse on a floor, then going home and setting it on the kitchen counter.

