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Top 10 Germiest Public Places

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HOUSTON -- Every day, we touch an average of 30 things a minute. But, we may not think about the germs and bacteria that lie within reach.

› [Men's Health Magazine: Top 10 Germ Spots](#) | [Health.com: Germiest Places In America](#)

We took a look at some of the filthiest surfaces out there, according to Prevention.com and Kimberly-Clark Professional.

No. 10: Grocery Store Carts: A University of Arizona study found almost two-thirds of them are contaminated with fecal bacteria.

Dr. Steven Rosenbaum is an internal medicine specialist at Baylor College of Medicine. He told Local 2 that such microscopic critters can thrive on hard surfaces.

Rosenbaum explained, "These organisms, especially viruses, they've been with us for millions of years. They can stay alive for days."

You've probably noticed antibacterial wipes at grocery stores. Doctors say you should definitely use one to wipe the handle of the cart, but then use a separate one to wipe your hands.

Dr. Rosenbaum added, "I think that's a great idea. My wife always reminds me to do that."

Here are some more filthy places.

No. 9: ATMs (Automated Teller Machines)

No. 8: Escalator rails

No. 7: Mailboxes

No. 6: Gas station pumps: They're breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses, giving pain at the pump a whole new meaning.

Rosenbaum advised, "Have one of those sanitizers in your glove box or in your console and just remember to do it."

Nos. 5 and 4 are no surprise: Public restrooms can give anyone the heebie-jeebies and those soap dispensers and restroom door handles are the worst.

The University of Arizona study found one in four public restroom soap dispensers is contaminated with fecal bacteria.

Rosenbaum suggested, "If you're taking the time to wash your hands and taking a fresh towel, go ahead (and) use the towel to open the door and use the trash can that's right by the door. That's what it's there for. I think it's a great habit."

The top three filthiest surfaces are especially disturbing because they're all found in restaurants.

No. 3: Condiments: They aren't exactly cleaned as often as they should be.

No. 2: Lemon wedges: They may add a kick to your iced tea, but according to one study, nearly 70 percent harbor E. coli.

Finally, the No. 1 filthiest surface, according to Prevention.com, is restaurant menus, which are touched by hundreds of people and rarely, if ever, cleaned.

So, are we living in a germ-phobic society? Maybe not.

Doctors recommend using those antibacterials in moderation and get that flu shot. It really can help build your immunity.

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