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People who use display iPads and iPhones at Apple stores are likely to get serious infections and the company should do more to maintain hygiene, says an Australian expert.

Peter Collignon, a specialist in infectious diseases at the Australian National University, followed research that found a higher risk of transmitting pathogens from glass surfaces like on iPads to human skin.



"You wouldn't have hundreds of people using the same glass or cup, but theoretically if hundreds of people share the same keyboard or touch pad, then effectively that's what you're doing," the Age quoted Collignon as saying in a phone interview.

"The germs we transmit via our hands can frequently have germs that can cause anything from the flu to multi-drug resistant diseases."

Scores of people visit Apple stores around the country every day to play with the company's latest gadgets. Earlier this year, an investigation by the New York Daily News found that of four iPads swabbed in two Apple stores, two contained harmful pathogens.

One contained Staphylococcus aureus, the most common cause of staph infections, while another registered Corynebacterium minutissimum, a bacteria commonly associated with skin rash.

A study published in the cautioned people against sharing their devices, as there was a higher risk of spreading germs

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from glass surfaces. Collignon said Apple and other gadget stores with touchscreen devices on display should make hand hygiene products "more readily available on counters."

"It doesn't have to be anything fancy it just has to be a 70 per cent alcohol solution. Maybe the various computer stores can make a more frequent effort to clean their equipment," he said.

"If you want to protect others then preferably don't share but if you do make sure your hands are clean before you touch it and afterwards," added Collignon.

TAGS: IPADS AND IPHONES, APPLE STORES, PETER COLLIGNON, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HUMAN SKIN, JOURNAL OF APPLIED MICROBIOLOGY, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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