



Hand Hygiene Q&A

Q: Does it really matter how you dry your hands?

A: Yes, the most common way germs are spread is through people's hands and damp hands spread 1,000 times more germs than dry hands. With single-use paper towels, it only takes a few seconds to dry your hands completely, while a warm air dryer takes, on average, 43 seconds to get your hands only 95 percent dry.

Q: What's the difference between washing with soap and using instant hand sanitizers?

A: In hygiene sensitive environments, instant hand sanitizers are recommended. Although very effective for disinfecting, sanitizers do not remove dirt. You should always wash your hands with liquid soap and water if there is visible dirt, contact with blood or after using the toilet; since sanitizers do not clean the hands of organic material they only disinfect them.

Q: Are warm air dryers really that bad?

A: They take longer to dry your hands, which increases the risk of users leaving without drying their hands properly. Studies have also shown that warm and hot air dryers increase the amount of bacteria after usage, unlike single-use paper towels.

Q: When will the H1N1/swine flu pandemic be over?

A: We don't want to speculate on how the pandemic will develop. At SCA Tissue we are, like so many others, following updates and recommendations from the WHO, the CDC, and other relevant authorities.

Q: Why is Tork concerned about the H1N1/swine flu?

A: H1N1, or the new influenza, is a global phenomenon and one that will affect many people in one way or another. Hygiene is an important part of how we can address this; and in this area Tork has solid knowledge and experience, and a clear commitment to and interest in following its development.

Q: What is the difference between soap and soap designated as anti-bacterial?

A: Soap designated "anti-bacterial" contains specific ingredients that have a proven extra anti-bacterial effect. But it is important to remember that most of the bacteria are removed from your hands when you wash them using high quality soap and dry them with paper hand towels. Health institutions consider that for everyday applications, such as office and public washrooms, normal soap provides a perfectly sufficient anti-bacterial effect. To minimize spread of the H1N1 virus, authorities recommend washing with soap and water, and supplement with instant hand sanitizer if available.

Q: How should people approach hygiene and hand washing?

A: People should make extra sure that they remember to wash their hands and to do it properly. This is particularly important at this time, just as during regular flu periods. However, it is always good to manage your hand hygiene properly and regularly, for example when handling food or when trying to avoid common colds.



Q: Isn't it obvious how you should wash your hands?

A: Everyone washes their hands from time to time but many don't do it often enough, just as they tend to forget some areas, such as washing between the fingers and not just the palms. Also, many people don't know how important it is to dry their hands thoroughly. It's easy when you know how.

Q: Isn't your communication adding to people's fears about H1N1/swine flu?

A: It's understandable that there's a major concern. We're not trying to increase that concern. We simply want to give people information about a simple, proven and very effective way of reducing the risk of becoming infected.

Q: How can you be sure that your advice works? There is still a lot of uncertainty about the infection routes of H1N1/swine flu. Isn't this advice just a cynical publicity stunt from Tork/SCA?

A: It's no secret that we're making products that are relevant for washing and drying your hands and managing your hygiene. It is an established fact that hand hygiene is an important way of preventing the spread of infection. We are following the WHO's and the CDC's recommendations, and we will react accordingly if they refer to new medical findings as a reason to change or develop these recommendations.

Q: How do you manage your hand hygiene at Tork (SCA)? Have you managed to avoid infection better than other companies?

A: We make sure that our co-workers always have properly equipped washrooms and toilets, and they all have extensive knowledge of washing and drying, and managing their hygiene. We can't make any comparisons, but given the fact that up to 2 billion may be infected with H1N1 worldwide during the next two years, it's likely to bring hardship for us as well as for everyone else.

Q: What is the minimum number of times that you should wash your hands during a day?

A: It depends on what you're doing. You should wash your hands after arriving at work, before meals or eating any food, after visiting the toilet, after sneezing, before preparing food, before and after visiting a sick person, after arriving home and when hands are visibly dirty.

Q: Can you guarantee that we can avoid being infected by H1N1/swine flu if we follow your advice?

A: There can never be any guarantees, but washing and drying your hands properly is a well-known way of radically reducing the risk of infection. The WHO's and the CDC's recommendations are also very clear on this matter.