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Women wash hands more often than men

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23 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Women wash hands more often than men

BNE: Women are better than men when it comes to washing their hands in public toilets. This is according to a new study* from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). It monitored the washing habits of thousands of people in restrooms in four major U.S. cities. It found 90 percent of women washed their hands, compared with 75 percent of men. A separate telephone survey revealed that people perhaps lie about how hygienic they are: 97 percent of women and 96 percent of men said they always wash their hands after using a public restroom.

Dr. Judy Daly of the ASM advised: "One of the most effective tools in preventing the spread of infection is at our fingertips. The single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to clean our hands." She explained that cold and flu viruses are spread by hands more often than through the air from sneezing. However, the study found only 42 percent wash after petting a dog or cat, 32 percent after coughing or sneezing and 21 percent after handling money. Banknotes and coins are full of illness-causing bacteria.

* <http://www.washup.org/>

WARM-UPS

1. I'M CLEAN: In pairs / groups, talk about how clean you are. How often do you wash your hands, take a bath or shower, clean your teeth, wash your hair, etc? Do you think you should wash more often?

2. BACTERIA ALERT: We are surrounded by bacteria and viruses, which of course we cannot see. With your partner(s), discuss the dangers of coming into contact with bacteria in the situations below. What should you do to reduce the danger of getting an infection?

- a. Visiting a public lavatory
- b. Eating at a public restaurant
- c. Petting dogs or cats
- d. Going shopping
- e. Using a public telephone or a computer in an Internet café
- f. Attending an English class

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Women / men / washing one's hands / public lavatories / hygiene / microbiology / fingertips / infections / getting sick / viruses / sneezing / dogs / banknotes

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. TOILETS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with toilets. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. MEN vs. WOMEN: Discuss the arguments below with a partner. Talk for just two minutes, before moving on to the next partner and debate. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- a. Women are cleaner than men. vs. Men have better personal hygiene habits.
- b. Men are more intelligent than women. vs. Women are more intelligent.
- c. Women are funnier than men. vs. Men are much better at telling jokes.
- d. Men are more honest than women. vs. Women are more honest than men.
- e. Women are better dressed than men. vs. Men have a better sense of style.
- f. Men are more interesting than women. vs. Women are more interesting.
- g. Women are more sensible than men. vs. Men have more common sense.
- h. Men are kinder than women. vs. Women are kinder than men.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Women wash their hands too much. | T / F |
| b. A study looked at hygiene habits in American lavatories. | T / F |
| c. Only 35 percent of American men wash their hands in public toilets. | T / F |
| d. People sometimes lie about how hygienic they are. | T / F |
| e. A doctor recommended buying tools to prevent infections. | T / F |
| f. The most important way of staying healthy is to take medicine. | T / F |
| g. Most colds are spread through people sneezing. | T / F |
| h. Banknotes and coins are full of illness-causing bacteria. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. toilets | fib |
| b. study | wash |
| c. monitored | suggested |
| d. revealed | stroking |
| e. lie | watched |
| f. advised | stopping |
| g. preventing | lavatories |
| h. clean | showed |
| i. petting | touching |
| j. handling | report |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Women are better than men | how hygienic they are |
| b. public | when it comes to washing |
| c. according to | often than through the air |
| d. telephone | of illness-causing bacteria |
| e. people perhaps lie about | illness to others |
| f. effective tools in preventing | survey |
| g. getting sick and spreading | a new study |
| h. viruses are spread by hands more | dog or cat |
| i. petting a | toilets |
| j. Banknotes and coins are full | the spread of infection |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Strike through the incorrect word in the *italicized* pairs.

Women wash hands more often than men

BNE: Women are better than men when it *comes / goes* to washing their hands in public toilets. This is *according / recording* to a new study from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). It *monitored / motored* the washing habits of thousands of people in restrooms in four *major / majority* U.S. cities. It found 90 percent of women washed their hands, *combined / compared* with 75 percent of men. A separate telephone survey *revealed / revolved* that people perhaps lie about how hygienic they are: 97 percent of women and 96 percent of men said they always wash their hands after using a public restroom.

Dr. Judy Daly of the ASM *advisors / advised*: "One of the most effective tools in preventing the *spread / spare* of infection is at our fingertips. The single most important thing we can do to *keep / give* from getting sick and spreading *wellness / illness* to others is to clean our hands." She explained that cold and flu viruses are spread by hands more often than through the *air / hair* from sneezing. However, the study found only 42 percent wash after petting a dog or cat, 32 percent after coughing or sneezing and 21 percent after *handling / arming* money. Banknotes and coins are full of illness-causing bacteria.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'telephone' and 'survey'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "HYGIENE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about hygiene and washing your hands.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- better
- study
- monitored
- major
- separate
- 96 percent
- advised
- fingertips
- keep
- viruses
- petting
- coins

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you careful when it comes to personal hygiene?
- d. Do you wash your hands every time you go to the toilet?
- e. What do you think of public toilets?
- f. Do you have a special routine every time you use a public toilet?
- g. What is the worst public toilet you have ever used?
- h. What do you think of toilets in other countries?
- i. Why do you think women are more hygienic than men?
- j. Do you think people in your country are very hygienic?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you do to keep from getting sick?
- d. Do you think people from your country wash their hands more or less often than Americans?
- e. Do you worry about infectious diseases?
- f. Do you often get colds or the flu?
- g. How often do you wash your hands after sneezing or petting animals?
- h. What do you think about banknotes and coins being full of illness-causing bacteria?
- i. Will you wash your hands more often after this lesson?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WASH YOUR HANDS: In pairs / groups, talk about how you can prevent the spread of infection in your everyday lives. Write down the things you touch throughout your day. Discuss the risks of spreading or getting infections. Think of the hygienic actions you could take to reduce the risks.

	THINGS I TOUCH	RISKS	HYGIENE ACTIONS
Breakfast			
Going to work / school			
At work / school			
After work / school			
Weekends			
Other			

Change partners and tell each other what you talked about with your first partners.

Discuss whether or not the risks are real. Would people in your country take your hygiene actions seriously.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Women wash hands more often than men

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Dr. Judy Daly of the ASM _____: "One of the most effective tools in preventing the _____ of infection is at our _____. The single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to clean our hands." She _____ that cold and flu viruses are spread by hands more often than through the air from _____. However, the study found only 42 percent wash after petting a dog or cat, 32 percent after coughing or sneezing and 21 percent after _____ money. Banknotes and coins are full of illness-causing _____.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on personal hygiene. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. HYGIENE: Make a poster describing how to prevent catching colds or the flu. What should people do every day to keep infections away. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a bacterium on a banknote. Write the diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. toilets | lavatories |
| b. study | report |
| c. monitored | watched |
| d. revealed | showed |
| e. lie | fib |
| f. advised | suggested |
| g. preventing | stopping |
| h. clean | wash |
| i. petting | stroking |
| j. handling | touching |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Women are better than men | when it comes to washing |
| b. public | toilets |
| c. according to | a new study |
| d. telephone | survey |
| e. people perhaps lie about | how hygienic they are |
| f. effective tools in preventing | the spread of infection |
| g. getting sick and spreading | illness to others |
| h. viruses are spread by hands more | often than through the air |
| i. petting a | dog or cat |
| j. Banknotes and coins are full | of illness-causing bacteria |

WHICH WORD?

Women wash hands more often than men

BNE: Women are better than men when it *comes* / ~~goes~~ to washing their hands in public toilets. This is *according* / ~~recording~~ to a new study from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). It *monitored* / ~~motored~~ the washing habits of thousands of people in restrooms in four *major* / ~~majority~~ U.S. cities. It found 90 percent of women washed their hands, *combined* / ~~compared~~ with 75 percent of men. A separate telephone survey *revealed* / ~~revolved~~ that people perhaps lie about how hygienic they are: 97 percent of women and 96 percent of men said they always wash their hands after using a public restroom.

Dr. Judy Daly of the ASM *advisors* / ~~advised~~: "One of the most effective tools in preventing the *spread* / ~~spare~~ of infection is at our fingertips. The single most important thing we can do to *keep* / ~~give~~ from getting sick and spreading *wellness* / ~~illness~~ to others is to clean our hands." She explained that cold and flu viruses are spread by hands more often than through the *air* / ~~hair~~ from sneezing. However, the study found only 42 percent wash after petting a dog or cat, 32 percent after coughing or sneezing and 21 percent after *handling* / ~~arming~~ money. Banknotes and coins are full of illness-causing bacteria.