

SOFIDEL FOR 2018 WORLD HAND HYGIENE DAY

According to a research study carried out at hospitals in 3 countries, there are three times fewer bacteria in bathrooms with paper towels rather than hand dryers.

**It's also important to follow some basic hand hygiene rules:
Sofidel has proposed 10 (+1).**

Tomorrow, **5 May, is World Hand Hygiene Day**, an annual event promoted since 2009 by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to improve everyday hygiene globally: on the occasion Sofidel, the tissue production group based in Porcari (Lucca) and leader in hygiene and household tissues, reaffirms **the importance of prevention as a tool for hygiene**, prevention which includes both the **means of hand drying** and the proposal of a **few simple rules helpful in going through our daily lives with peace of mind**.

Paper towels or hand dryer? From the perspective of hygiene, the first option comes out on top. This option is confirmed and reinforced by a recent research study by Prof. Mark Wilcox, consultant and professor in medical microbiology at Leeds University (UK). The study, supported by ETS (European Tissue Symposium) and conducted at three hospitals in France, Italy and the United Kingdom, was presented at the major European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) event, held recently in Madrid, Spain, from 21 to 24 April.

Two bathrooms were set up in each hospital, each with a single hand-drying method available, with the aim of measuring the **degree of environmental contamination in the bathrooms of the hospitals associated with the hand-drying methods**. Among the bacteria that the research took into account: *Staphylococcus Aureus*, enterococci, enterobacteria including *Escherichia coli* and *Klebsiella* spp.

The results showed significant differences in bacterial contamination: **more bacteria were collected in the bathrooms fitted with hand dryers, both from the floor and from the dryers themselves, than from the facilities with paper towels**.

The 10 (+1) rules for a hygienic daily life. But using paper towels alone isn't enough to prevent bacterial infections: that's why Sofidel promotes the ten rules of *"24 hours with your hands"*, created **with the scientific advice of Prof. Fabrizio Pregliasco**, virologist at the University of Milan and Hospital Administrator at the IRCCS Galeazzi in Milan.

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These are **ten (plus one) intriguing and sometimes surprising rules, for reflecting on the importance of hygiene in the various moments of our day and places we find ourselves** as we progress through the hours of the day.

“Our hands are a repository for germs,”** Prof. Pregliasco has commented. “A percentage of these are non-pathogenic microorganisms that normally remain on the skin without causing damage. These can be joined, however, by viruses and bacteria that circulate in the air or with which we come into contact by touching the most diverse surfaces. **How can we defend ourselves? Above all by washing our hands thoroughly, then by paying particular attention to certain objects – or places – with which we come into contact in the course of the day.”

Hands are our main means of contact with the world and consequently the most exposed to germs of every type. Some are harmless (for example, most of the ones we “encounter” on public transport), others potentially dangerous (like the ones we take home with shoes and bags); we find some of them exactly where we might expect (taps and handles in public toilets), others where we wouldn’t dream of it (our sheets). **Bacteria are no respecters of PCs, smartphones or traditional phones either.** Just think that, according to an American research (Prof. Beamer and C. Gerba)*, hundreds of bacteria lurk on these devices: **there are 260 bacteria per cm² on a mouse, 511 on a keyboard and no fewer than 3,895 on a handset!**

The main solution remains that of the eleventh commandment: **washing our hands with warm water and soap, for 40–60 seconds, rubbing well all over, then drying off with a disposable paper towel. This simple practice permits the elimination of 99% of bacteria.**

Promotion of the culture of health has always been one of Sofidel’s aims, on one hand through the creation of products with a high level of health and hygiene characteristics and on the other through the **promotion of healthy lifestyles and good practice in hygiene** among its workers, consumers and stakeholders in general.

Porcari, 4 May 2018

The Sofidel Group

The Sofidel Group is one of the leading manufacturer of paper for hygienic and domestic use worldwide. Established in 1966, the Group has subsidiaries in 13 countries – Italy, Spain, the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Turkey and the USA - with more than 6,000 employees, net sales of 1,724 million Euros (2017) and a production capacity of over one million tonnes per year (1,098,000 tonnes in 2017). “Regina”, its most well-known brand, is present on almost all the reference markets. Other brands include: Softis, Le Trèfle, Sopalin, Nouvelle, Thirst Pockets, KittenSoft, Nalys, Cosynel, Yumy, Soft & Easy, Volare, Onda, Lycke, Forest, Nicky, Papernet. A member of UN Global Compact and the international WWF Climate Savers programme, the Sofidel Group considers sustainability a strategic factor with regards to growth and is committed to promoting socially and environmentally responsible development.

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