

Hygiene Practices while Travelling



Adopting good hygiene practices while travelling makes sense. While travelling you are likely to come into contact with a lot of people, and proper hygiene practices will help to protect your health



What are the hazards?

The main microbial hazards that may be encountered when travelling that may impact your health or the health of others includes:

- Viruses: e.g. *Rotavirus*, *Norovirus*, *Coronavirus*
- Bacteria: e.g. *Campylobacter*, *Staphylococcus*
- Protozoa: e.g. *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*.

Personnel that are travelling come into contact with a lot of different people, including taxi drivers, bus drivers, airline personnel, and other travellers, so it is important to reduce the likelihood of contamination occurring by adopting good hygiene practices.

What are the preventative measures?

Washing hands often is the best way to control pathogens. Hand-washing should include:

- Washing hands with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds.
- Antibacterial soap is not necessarily better. Any germs on your hands are attached to the layer of acidic fats, oils and cellular debris on the surface of the skin, and soap dissolves this layer dislodging the microbes from your skin;
- Running water is best. Although hot water can kill microbes, the temperature needed (>80°C) would cause burns. Warm water may help in producing a better soap lather;
- Rinse your hands with water once the soap and friction have lifted the dirt and germs from your skin.

Having clean (and disinfected if necessary) clothing, workspaces, equipment, tools, phones and computers is also an important factor in controlling microbial infection.

Most modern planes contain hospital-grade air filters, so the chance of contracting a microbial illness from aircraft air-conditioning is slim. It is a much higher chance that virus and bacteria are passed on by people coughing or sneezing, or not following good hygiene practices.

Virus and bacteria can survive outside the human body for hours to days, depending on the type of organism, the type of material and the heat and humidity of the area. Therefore, it is prudent to disinfect, even if nobody has had contact with the material for a period of time.



Hygiene Do's

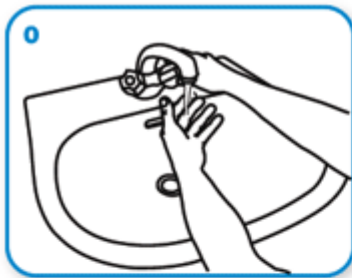
- Always wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds:
 - After you use the bathroom;
 - After you cough or sneeze;
 - After taking public transport or using a taxi;
 - Before eating or preparing food;
 - When dealing with somebody who is sick;
- If soap is unavailable, use hand sanitiser or gel that contains at least 60 % alcohol. Be aware that hand sanitiser will not work if the hands are already dirty, or for certain microbial contaminants if contact time is not adequate (leave for >20 seconds);
- Cough into your elbow or into a clean tissue, throw the tissue in the bin, and then wash the infected area;
- Seek medical attention if you are feeling sick;
- Let your supervisor and/or coordinator know if you are unwell;
- Wipe down your travel tray, seat arms and other equipment with alcohol wipes, or spray with Glen 20;
- Ensure you are following appropriate WHS and organisational policies and procedures;
- Wipe the nozzle of your air-conditioning vent with an antibacterial wipe;
- Make sure your phone, laptop or smart screen is disinfected with alcohol wipes as required;
- Try to avoid coming in contact with people if possible. Board the plane or other means of transport late to avoid the bustle;
- Be wary of the hygiene habits of the aircraft crew;
- If you come across somebody who has a viral infection, gargle some antibacterial and antiviral mouthwash.

Hygiene Don'ts

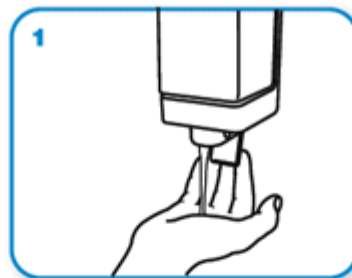
- Don't come to work when you are sick. This is both a Simmonds & Bristow policy, as well as a socially astute practice to reduce the likelihood of illnesses spreading;
- Don't allow other people who are sick to infect you;
- Don't use the same tools or equipment that are potentially contaminated (e.g. handled by somebody else) without first cleaning and/or disinfecting;
- Don't operate your computer or other equipment without first washing your hands;
- Don't drink water straight from a bubbler. Instead, use a properly washed reusable bottle that you have not shared with anybody;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, unless you have previously washed your hands (and make sure you wash your hands after you touch these areas as well);
- Face-masks are not necessary when travelling, but may help by preventing you touching your face.



Correct hand-washing procedure



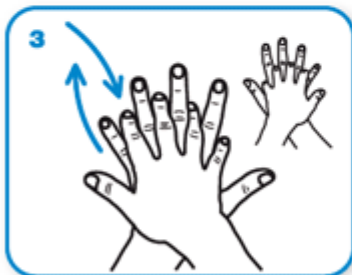
Wet hands with water



apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



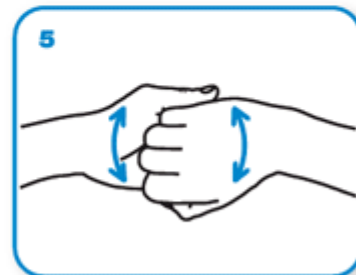
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



palm to palm with fingers interlaced



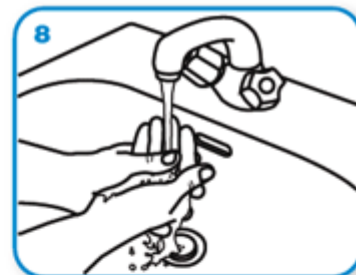
backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



rotational rubbing of left thumb clapsed in right palm and vice versa



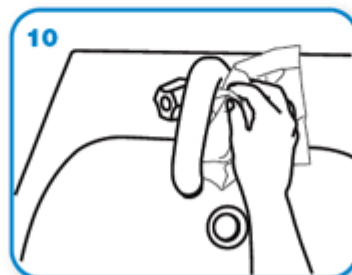
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clapsed fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

Source: World Health Organisation Website: https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/