

# OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

## Don't Let Germs Make You Sick

It's flu and cold season. Avoiding the germs help us avoid the flu and colds, so where are the germs lurking? You might be surprised to find where some of the germiest places are.



Most important is to [wash your hand with soap and water often](#). This is the best way to reduce the germs you are exposed to. Be sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds and build up a lather before rinsing.

- **Home:** Your kitchen is the germiest place. It has more bacteria than your bathrooms due to the germs on raw meat and produce. Clean and disinfect or sanitize your kitchen sink often. If you use a sponge be sure to run it through the dishwasher every time. Also disinfect your kitchen countertops. Cold and flu germs can usually remain [active on stainless steel, plastic and similar hard surfaces longer](#) than on fabric or other types of soft surfaces.



- **Cellphone:** Since we carry our cellphones everywhere they are usually loaded with bacteria including viruses like the flu. Frequently [clean your smartphone with an alcohol-free antiseptic wipe](#). (Alcohol is not good for your screen.)
- **Purse:** Do you hang your purse or set it on the floor? Since floors are really dirty places, especially restroom floors your purse may be nasty. Hang your purse on a hook or the back of a chair when possible. Never put your purse on the kitchen counter. Wipe your purse with a disinfect wipe.
- **Workplace:** You may think the worse place is the restroom but the [ground-floor elevator](#) will probably beat it out for the germiest place. Another place is the [coffee pot handle](#) in the break room or the water dispenser. Wash your hand as soon as you can after touching either one of these.



- **Restaurants:** Guess what everyone touches? The menu has the most bacteria. Thus, after ordering your food, go to the restroom and wash your hands or take some hand sanitizer and use it before eating.

- **Grocery Stores:** If you guessed the grocery cart you are right. You can use one of those disinfecting wipes on the handles. If you use reusable grocery bags put them on the floor, not the kitchen counter and wash them often in hot water and bleach. Always wash your hands or sanitize them after shopping.



**Remember** eating healthy, being physically active and washing your hands are keys to staying healthy. Hope you avoid the flu and colds.

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