



SURFACEMASTERS

Shoe Study and Cross Contamination into Homes and Businesses

Dr. Charles Gerba, a microbiologist and professor at the University of Arizona, joined forces with shoemaker Rockport to study what types of microorganisms are transported by footwear. Ten people were given a brand new pair of shoes to use for two weeks before having them tested for bacteria.

After two weeks, more than 420,000 units of bacteria were found on the outside of the test shoes. Of that bacteria, 27% were deadly E. Coli virus. Also detected was Klebsiella pneumonia, which can cause pneumonia and wound and bloodstream infections and Serratia ficaria, which can lead to infection of the respiratory tract.

“The common occurrence (96 percent) of coliform and E. coli bacteria on the outside of the shoes indicates frequent contact with fecal material, which most likely originates from floors in public restrooms or contact with animal fecal material outdoors,” said Gerba. “Our study also indicated that bacteria can be tracked by shoes over a long distance into your home or personal space after the shoes were contaminated with bacteria.”

Even more disturbing to moms of little ones – 90 to 99% of bacteria found on the exterior of the shoes was transmitted to hard tile and carpet.

Any germs picked up by bare feet, knees and hands will then be transported to the crib at naptime.

To help keep these germs at bay, simply remove your shoes and leave them by the door when you get home. Frequent vacuuming and mopping will also help. The study also found simply washing the shoes eliminated more than 90% of germs.

If you aren't comfortable asking your babysitter or guest to walk around in their bare feet or socks, there are many cute house slippers on the market (and several organic versions) that won't leave anyone feeling awkward.

Valley Wide Services

Phone: 602.341.3880 Fax: 602.997.4120

info@surface-masters.com | www.surface-masters.com

Colossians 1: 9-14



SURFACEMASTERS

But Do We Really Touch Floors That Often?

It's pretty clear to see how children come into contact with floors and the contaminants that may be on them. But how often do we adults actually come into contact with floors?

Warner explained that adults may have as many as 50 direct and indirect contacts with floors every day, and children likely have many more. With each 'touch,' we can come in contact with pathogens. Among his examples of how this happens are these:

- Tying a shoelace
- Touching and wrapping up power cords
- Moving a mat
- Picking up a tool, pen, or piece of paper that has fallen to the floor
- Lifting a briefcase or purse that was placed on the floor

In fact, women's purses can be major sources of contamination. In an informal but still informative June 2006 study conducted by an Atlanta television station, researchers asked 50 random women visiting a shopping center if they could swab the women's purses. Laboratory results found that one in four purses contained significant amounts of E. coli and other bacteria. Digging a bit deeper, researchers discovered that all of the contaminated purses had recently been placed on the floors of the mall's public restrooms ... likely making the floors the source of the contamination.

Thorough and frequent floor cleaning along with more aggressive actions when there is a public health threat or concern are the best ways to stop the hitchhiking of floor contaminants, according to Warner. This involves both the type of cleaning performed and the types of cleaning chemicals and floor equipment used.

For instance, Warner suggests that if there is no dangerous infection or pathogen present, floors can be cleaned following standard procedures using clean mops and mop heads and neutral cleaners. However, if a health threat or concern *exists in a community* (for instance, H1N1), 'The neutral cleaners should be replaced with products that have greater cleaning efficacy such as a neutral cleaner-disinfectant with specific 'kill claims' for the pathogens of concern,' he says. 'These kill claims should be indicated on the product's label.'

In addition, no-touch cleaning equipment, which is now considered a 'sanitizing device' by the Environmental Protection Agency, should be employed.

Valley Wide Services

Phone: 602.341.3880 Fax: 602.997.4120

info@surface-masters.com | www.surface-masters.com

Colossians 1: 9-14



SURFACE**MASTERS**

Death By Flip Flops

Over the past several years, flip-flops have taken some really cool new directions. They were once merely the staple footwear of treehuggers and surf rats, but now have found their way into mainstream fashion. Flip-flops now come in more different styles and colors than can be listed.

With the flip-flop boom has come a very fierce debate among sartorialists regarding the appropriate venue for this type of casual footwear. On various occasions, highbrow fashion rags have blasted the idea of wearing flip-flops around in a metropolitan setting, even with a casual get-up. The consensus seems to be that flip-flops should be reserved for the beach and loafing around the house, only.

Despite the demand from fashion gurus to ditch the flip-flops while sauntering city streets on the weekend, it is very apparent that people are either unaware of this fashion faux pas, or are choosing to ignore it.

Normally there is nothing wrong with ignoring what the “experts” claim to be fashionable, or not. In fact, that is how trends start. People laughed when they first saw Thom Browne’s flood-water suit pants. Now they have become an extremely hot item. In this case, though, things are a little bit different.

As it turns out, wearing flip-flops in an urban environment is not only contra-fashionable, it is also dangerous, and possibly fatal.

According to an experiment recently conducted by the Daily News, flip-flops very quickly become mobile petri dishes loaded up with extremely dangerous (possibly deadly) bacteria.

According to the research conducted in the article:

Lab tests of two reporters’ flip-flops, worn for four days, revealed a potentially deadly germ – Staphylococcus aureus – lurking on the rubber. If it seeps into a cut on your foot – an entirely common summer affliction – the bacteria can enter the bloodstream and, if left untreated, kill you.

Valley Wide Services

Phone: 602.341.3880 Fax: 602.997.4120

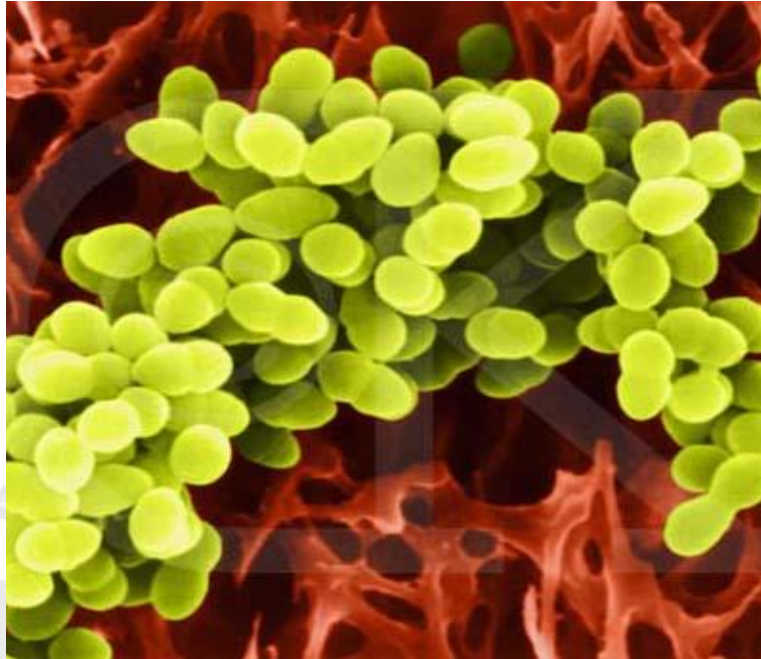
info@surface-masters.com | www.surface-masters.com

Colossians 1: 9-14



SURFACE**MASTERS**

Yes, you read correctly, it can KILL YOU. After wearing the flip-flops around for only four days, the flip-flops used in the experiment contained approximately 18,000 different bacteria. The facts get even more disgusting when they account for the fact that the pair which made their way into a public bathroom contained an additional 13,900 bacteria. Ewwwww.



Staphylococcus Aureus: to-go on your flip flops

Dr. Charles P. Gerba of the University of Arizona points out that wearing flip-flops on a regular basis increases the amount of danger dramatically, saying “If you wear shoes for three months, 93% have fecal bacteria and 20% have E. coli.”

In reality, the study conducted by the Daily News only confirms what our common sense should have told us all along. We need more than a thin piece of foam between our feet, when we are walking around on the same concrete that we have seen used as a bathroom by vagabonds, puked on by weekenders, and scurried all over by rats and roaches. As this summer winds down, heed the fashion advice of the powers that be. For your own safety, save your flip-flops for the beach.

Valley Wide Services

Phone: 602.341.3880 Fax: 602.997.4120

info@surface-masters.com | www.surface-masters.com

Colossians 1: 9-14