

Busted: Hand Hygiene Myths

Facts, opinions, even urban legends – there’s a lot of information out there on hand sanitizer, but not all of it is completely accurate. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a preferred choice for people from doctors and restaurant employees to parents and teachers. Here are some misconceptions about hand sanitizer, and how you can respond to these common myths.

MYTH

Using hand sanitizer creates antibiotic resistance.



TRUTH

Antibiotics operate completely differently than hand sanitizers. Typically, they’re ingested and slow the growth and reproduction of bacteria. PURELL® Advanced Hand Sanitizer destroys the cell walls, killing bacteria quickly and evaporating before germs have a chance to develop a resistance.

MYTH

Hand sanitizer creates superbugs.



TRUTH

Superbugs – or antibiotic resistant bacteria – are created when bacteria build up a tolerance to treatments like antibiotics. The main ingredient in PURELL hand sanitizers is ethyl alcohol, which destroys cell walls and evaporates quickly from the skin, which means bacteria don’t have the opportunity to fight back and build resistance.

MYTH

All germs are the same.



TRUTH

When it comes to germs on your skin, there are two types. Resident organisms and transient ones. Resident organisms live in all the layers of our skin, while transient organisms are acquired when we touch things, and can cause illness if they’re ingested before they can be removed from the skin.

PURELL® Well-Being Center

MYTHS OF HAND HYGIENE



MYTH

Using hand sanitizer kills ALL germs on the skin – even the good ones.



TRUTH

Resident organisms are part of our normal microflora, and while it's true that hand sanitizer does kill some of them on the outer layers of our skin, they repopulate quickly – and most live throughout the layers of our skin, and many remain unharmed. The transient organisms – the ones that can make you sick – are found on the surface layer of our skin and are eliminated when you sanitize.

MYTH

All hand sanitizers are the same.



TRUTH

On the surface, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may all seem identical, but how they're formulated can impact their effectiveness, harshness on skin, and overall user experience. PURELL hand sanitizers are formulated to maximize the power of alcohol while still maintaining skin health, making sanitizing a more enjoyable experience and promoting good hand hygiene.

MYTH

Hand sanitizers contain triclosan.



TRUTH

PURELL hand sanitizers do not contain triclosan. The FDA does not allow triclosan to be used in products that are left on the skin.

MYTH

Frequently using hand sanitizer dries out my hands.



TRUTH

PURELL hand sanitizers are formulated with the mildest, most effective ingredients available. So even in high-use situations, you can count on a product that not only eliminates germs that may cause illness, it also helps keep your skin feeling soft.