

# Germs Are Everywhere!

“Wash your hands before you eat.” You have probably been told this plenty of times. It’s good advice. Who wants to come inside after playing ball or riding a bike and eat with dirty hands? Outside dirt is one thing. But trillions of germs are lurking inside your home, too. Can you guess what they are?



## Germ Magnets

If you think a toilet is a germ magnet, you’re right. Even when a bathroom looks super clean, germs are still hiding out there. Every time you flush the toilet, germs spray into the air. They fly around and land on all sorts of things—maybe even your toothbrush!

What may be even dirtier than a toilet? A kitchen sink, according to infection-control experts. Most people disinfect their toilet bowls, but they may not clean their kitchen sinks as carefully. Sinks can be crawling with bacteria from leftover food particles. Of course, you’d never eat anything that fell in the toilet. But how many times have you eaten food that’s fallen in the sink?

Other super germ items include remote controls, cell phones, and computer keyboards. Money is especially filthy. A single dollar bill or coin may pass through thousands of hands! Doorknobs, handrails, and the faucets and flush handles in public restrooms are germ magnets, too!

## Defense Against Germs

What’s the best way to get rid of germs? At home, you can disinfect the objects you touch the most. But the best line of defense is so easy, it’s almost silly. Whether you’re at home or away from home—wash your hands with soap and water!

Experts say everyone should wash their hands several times a day. This is the best way to prevent getting sick from other people’s germs. It also keeps you from spreading your own germs around. When soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer is the next best option.

Studies show young people don’t wash their hands enough. One study of students revealed that only 58% of girls and 48% of boys washed their hands after using the bathroom. Other studies show that only 32% of people of all ages wash their hands after coughing and sneezing, and only 21% wash after handling money. How do you measure up?

### Write the answers.

1. How many germs may be lurking inside your home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Copy the sentence that explains why kitchen sinks are more germier than toilets. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Name five germ magnets found in your home. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What’s the best way to prevent the spread of germs? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Which is the best option for washing hands: soap and water or hand sanitizer?  
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\_\_\_\_\_

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(RI.3.1, RI.4.1, RI.5.1)

## ANSWER KEY

1. trillions
2. Most people disinfect their toilet bowls, but they don't always clean their kitchen sinks as carefully.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Wash your hands often using soap and water.
5. soap and water