

Hygienic Cellphone Handling Habits to Avoid Illnesses



Did you know that your cellphone can host germs that can cause illness? When you use your cellphone with unclean hands, germs can attach to the surface turning your phone into a mobile reservoir for pathogens. When you set your phone down on dirty surfaces, it can pick up microbes that can make their way to your eyes and mouth.

To minimize your exposure to cellphone-borne illnesses, consider these device hygiene tips:

- **Be mindful of where you set your cellphone down.** Restrooms, airplane trays, hospital check-in counters, and other public spaces are common areas where your cellphone can pick up germs.
- **Disinfect your cellphone frequently.** Use disinfecting wipes or alcohol swabs. If you don't use a cellphone case, do a little research to make sure these cleaning agents won't damage your cellphone. If you do use a cellphone case, remember to clean both the case and your phone separately.
- **Keep your hands clean.** While handwashing sounds pretty simple, keeping them clean doesn't last very long. Think about the number of door handles or surfaces you touch from the moment you wash your hands to the moment you pick up your device, or the number of surfaces or objects you touch in between handling your cellphone (i.e., grocery cart, money, check-out or ATM keypads, gas pump dispenser, etc.). The cleaner your hands are, the less likely for germs to attach to your cellphone. Carry disinfectant wipes or a hand sanitizer.
- **Keep your phone away from the dining table.** Not only will you avoid contaminating your food, but you'll also avoid picking up food residue that can contribute to bacterial growth. High temperature and humidity generated by phones, support germination and biofilm formation on the surface of your device.
- **Keep your phone to yourself.** Remember, this is a gadget you hold next to your face, near your eyes and mouth which are the most common infection gateways. If you do pass your phone around, or let someone else handle it, remember to clean it before you hold it up to your face.
- **Clean your wireless charging pad and cellphone holders.** These are also gadgets that come in frequent contact with your cellphone, and easy to overlook as germ hosts. Don't forget to disinfect other surfaces like your desk, keyboard, and mouse.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control, "What You Should Know" Coronavirus page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

WA State Department of Health Coronavirus Information: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

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