

# Kimberly-Clark Professional™ Reinforces The Importance Of Handwashing During Cold And Flu Season

**As 95% of people do not wash their hands correctly,<sup>1</sup> wellbeing and productivity can be enhanced by using the right techniques and the best products, such as quality soap and single-use paper towels.**

**LONDON, 1 November 2023** – Kimberly-Clark Professional is marking the start of cold and flu season by reinforcing the importance of handwashing and offering tips on how to wash your hands properly to avoid transmitting germs.

According to research, handwashing can reduce community illnesses such as colds by 21% and reduce the number of people who get sick with diarrhoea by 31%.<sup>2</sup>

At a time when more people have adopted everyday health habits since the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>3</sup> Kimberly-Clark Professional is keen to highlight some facts about handwashing, including:

- Roughly 95% of people do not wash their hands correctly.<sup>1</sup>
- It's important to use enough soap for your hands to be covered. This means that the amount of soap needed can vary depending on hand size, or even how soiled hands are prior to hand washing.
- Scientific evidence suggests that washing hands for 15-30 seconds removes more germs than washing hands for shorter periods of time.<sup>4</sup>
- There is no evidence that using hot water leads to improved hand cleaning.<sup>5</sup> The important thing is washing at a temperature comfortable enough to sustain adequate scrubbing and washing time.

It is not just techniques that can improve hygiene and wellbeing. A number of studies suggest that drying hands with a single-use paper towel is the most hygienic method of hand drying<sup>6</sup> and should be recommended for hygiene-critical environments.

In fact, paper towels, such as those by Scott® and Kleenex®, can remove 77% of the bacteria that may remain on hands after hand washing.<sup>7</sup> In addition, they help to mitigate the risk of introducing additional bacteria into the process. Some powerful air dryers, called 'jet air dryers', have also been shown to blow water droplets containing bacteria and viruses as far as 6.5 feet away.

"The importance of drying your hands is typically underappreciated, because germs are transferred more easily from wet hands," said Dr Stephanie Martin, Global Product Technical Leader at Kimberly-Clark Professional.

"We've all seen those posters on the wall that have detailed steps for handwashing - the process really does matter, as do the products."

Single-use paper towels are also remarkably efficient at removing moisture and bacteria from hands. A study published in the Journal of Applied Microbiology found that paper towels were more effective at reducing the bacterial count on hands than air dryers.<sup>8</sup>

Paper towels are also fast, providing a quick and thorough hand-drying experience. This can be especially important in busy public places where prompt hand drying is essential for efficiency and hygiene.

“They are also versatile in helping to shut off the water tap or open a door handle if needed once hands are clean and are less likely to lead to a queue or bottleneck in the washroom like hand dryers do, given that they can only be used by one person at a time,” adds Martin.

And it’s not just hand drying that matters. The type of soap and dispenser may also have an impact on hand hygiene. In fact, studies have shown that 1 in 4 refillable soap dispensers can become contaminated with harmful bacteria that can remain on the users' hands even after using the soap.<sup>9</sup> These germs include fecal bacteria, as well as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, which may lead to skin and eye infections. The bacteria may also be transferred to other surfaces nearby. That’s why Kimberly-Clark Professional has been committed to providing high quality Scott® and Kleenex® brand soap and sanitiser products in enclosed cassette systems to protect against contamination.

Promoting effective hand hygiene is a collective responsibility. Encouraging people to wash their hands thoroughly and choose the right method for hand drying is a vital part of hygiene and health.

Good hand hygiene is a year-round opportunity. In homes, workplaces, healthcare facilities, and public spaces, the choice of quality hand soaps for cleansing and single-use paper towels for hand drying can make a substantial difference in reducing the spread of infections.

#### Sources:

1. Borchgrevink, CP, Cha J, Kim S, “Hand Washing Practices in a College Town Environment,” Journal of Environmental Health, 2013, Volume 75(8): 18-24.
2. Centers for Disease Control: Hand Hygiene at Work, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-corporate.html>
3. <https://selazar.com/ecommerce-fulfilment/the-wellness-industry-pandemic-creates-surge-in-self-care-products>
4. World Health Organization: How to Hand Wash [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/patient-safety/how-to-handwash-poster.pdf?sfvrsn=7004a09d\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/patient-safety/how-to-handwash-poster.pdf?sfvrsn=7004a09d_2)
5. Centers for Disease Control: Show Me the Science – Frequent Questions About Hand Hygiene, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/faqs.html>
6. Huang C, Ma W, Stack S, “The Hygienic Efficacy of Different Hand-Drying Methods: A Review of the Evidence,” Mayo Clinic Proceedings, 2012, Volume 87(8): 791-798.
7. Redway K, Fawdar S, “A comparative study of three different hand drying methods: paper towel, warm air dryer, jet air dryer,” European Tissue Symposium, November 2008
8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3538484/>
9. Zapka CA, Campbell EJ, Maxwell SL, Gerba CP, Dolan MJ, Arbogast JW, Macinga DR, “Bacterial Hand Contamination and Transfer after Use of Contaminated Bulk-Soap-Refillable Dispensers,” Applied and Environmental Microbiology, 2001, 77(9): 2898-2904

### **About Kimberly-Clark Professional**

Kimberly-Clark Professional partners with businesses to create Exceptional Workplaces, helping to make them healthier, safer, and more productive. Key brands in this segment include Kleenex, Scott, WypAll, KleenGuard, and Kimtech. To see how Kimberly-Clark Professional is helping people around the world to work better, please visit [www.kcprofessional.com](http://www.kcprofessional.com).

### **About Kimberly-Clark**

Kimberly-Clark (NYSE: KMB) and its trusted brands are an indispensable part of life for people in more than 175 countries. Fueled by ingenuity, creativity, and an understanding of people's most essential needs, we create products that help individuals experience more of what's important to them. Our portfolio of brands, including Huggies, Kleenex, Scott, Kotex, Cottonelle, Poise, Depend, Andrex, Pull-Ups, GoodNites, Intimus, Neve, Plenitud, Sweety, Softex, Viva and WypAll, hold No. 1 or No. 2 share positions in approximately 80 countries. We use sustainable practices that support a healthy planet, build strong communities, and ensure our business thrives for decades to come. We are proud to be recognised as one of the world's most ethical companies by Ethisphere for the fifth year in a row. To keep up with the latest news and to learn more about the company's 150-year history of innovation, visit [kimberly-clark.com](http://kimberly-clark.com).

For further information: Stephanie Sergeant, Suzanne Howe Communications Tel: +44 (0)2034 680923 Email: [steph@suzannehowe.com](mailto:steph@suzannehowe.com) Louisa Moore, Media Relations Kimberly-Clark Professional [media.relations@kcc.com](mailto:media.relations@kcc.com)

---

Additional assets available online:

**Photos** <sup>(2)</sup>

<https://www.news.kimberly-clark.com/2023-11-06-Kimberly-Clark-Professional-TM-reinforces-the-importance-of-handwashing-during-cold-and-flu-season>