

What's Your Germ Personality?

ROSWELL, Ga., Sept. 10, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Everyone has a unique personality. But did you know that you and the people you work with each day also have unique *germ* personalities?

A [new quiz](#) from [Kimberly-Clark Professional](#) can tell you where you stand on the germaphobe spectrum as well as how the germ personalities (and hygiene habits) of co-workers, colleagues and others can impact your health.

With cold-and-flu season on its way, knowing your germ personality could be more important than you think. Whether you're a "Fearful Fanatic" or a "Proud Exterminator," if you're among the more than one third of the population who are germ anxious, you may want to prepare sooner rather than later.

That's because many of the people around you are "Unconcerned" (in quiz terminology), which means they may not have the best hygiene habits. As a result, they can spread germs to others via commonly touched surfaces in offices, hotels, schools, stadiums and other locations. These germ "hot spots" are breeding grounds for illness-causing bacteria -- including cold, flu and stomach bugs.

Consider these findings from Kimberly-Clark Professional studies that measured contamination levels at work, away from home and at school:

- *At work:* The break room topped the list of office germ hot spots and the average desk -- where many people eat their lunch -- was found to have 20,951 germs per square inch. Sink and microwave door handles were the dirtiest surfaces touched by office workers on a daily basis and high levels of contamination were also found on computer keyboards, water fountain and vending machine buttons. Practicing good hand and surface hygiene can reduce average hot spot germ counts by 59 percent.
- *Away from home:* Testing in six major U.S. cities revealed that more than 65 percent of gas pump and mail box handles and more than 40 percent of escalator rails and ATM machine buttons were highly contaminated -- potentially exposing people to illness-causing bacteria. Another study found that TV remotes and bathroom sink faucets were among the most contaminated surfaces in hotel rooms.
- *At school:* Highly contaminated surfaces in schools include bathroom stall door handles, classroom desks and door handles. In fact, the surfaces that teachers touch have 10 times more bacteria per square inch than those touched by people in other professions.

Don't be caught off guard. Be prepared to take care -- especially given the severity of last year's flu outbreak, which was declared an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There's a lot you can do to protect yourself, including sharing these tips -- not germs -- with family, friends and colleagues.

- *Speak up.* Tell the people in charge -- at your office, your children's school, a hotel, or any place else -- that you care about staying healthy and ask them to stock up on supplies that can help break the chain of germ transmission. These include instant hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and plenty of soap, paper towels and facial tissue.
- *Lead by example.* Wash your hands often. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Use disinfecting wipes to clean common surfaces, especially if they've been touched by someone who is sick.
- *Wash, wipe, sanitize.* The HYGIENIFY! wash, wipe, sanitize protocol reduces the probability of infection from colds and flu in the workplace by about 80 percent.¹ The use of disinfecting wipes can reduce the number of surfaces contaminated by viruses by 62 percent.

Remember: The "Unconcerned" people around you during cold-and-flu season can leave *you* unprotected. Make sure you prepare to take care of yourself in advance of cold-and-flu season. Research has demonstrated that if

50 percent of people follow the wash, wipe, sanitize protocol, the exposure to and probability of infection from common viruses is significantly reduced. To learn more or to take the germ personality quiz, visit [The Cold and Flu HQ](#) at www.kcprofessional.com/ColdandFluHQ.

A Multifaceted Approach to Germ Fighting

Through programs such as [The Healthy Workplace Project](#), [The Healthy Schools Project](#), [LiveWell](#) and others, Kimberly-Clark Professional offers a unique approach to hand and surface hygiene that helps people understand how germs are transmitted to help stop their spread. The programs provide educational materials in conjunction with hand and surface hygiene products, arming people with the tools and knowledge necessary to break the chain of germ transmission in offices, schools, manufacturing facilities, hotels, stadiums and other locations. By reinforcing the importance of the HYGIENIFY! protocol of wash, wipe, sanitize, people can help reduce the spread of cold, flu and other germs. For more information, visit [The Cold and Flu HQ](#) at www.kcprofessional.com/ColdandFluHQ.

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, Kimtech and Jackson Safety. Kimberly-Clark Professional, located in Roswell, Ga., is one of Kimberly-Clark Corporation's four business sectors. To see how we are helping people the world over work better, please visit www.kcprofessional.com.

About Kimberly-Clark

Kimberly-Clark Corp. (NYSE: KMB) and its well-known global brands are an indispensable part of life for people in more than 175 countries. Every day, nearly a quarter of the world's population trust K-C's brands and the solutions they provide to enhance their health, hygiene and well-being. With brands such as Kleenex, Scott, Huggies, Pull-Ups, Kotex and Depend, Kimberly-Clark holds the No. 1 or No. 2 share position in more than 80 countries. To keep up with the latest K-C news and to learn more about the Company's 141-year history of innovation, visit www.kimberly-clark.com or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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1 The reduction in probability of infection by 80 percent is based upon mathematical modeling referenced in the Workplace Wellness Intervention Study.

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