

The dirtiest things you touch

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At this time of year, cold and flu season mixes with holiday shopping, parties and travel. That means extra opportunities to share holiday cheer—and germs and viruses. However, you may be surprised by how germ-filled common objects and places are that you encounter every day along the way.

Most people aren't aware they are doing it. They touch their faces between three to 30 times an hour. The problem, says Dr. Gregory Poland, is what they touch beforehand often is riddled with germs.

"Bathroom faucets, [door handles](#), escalator rails, computer terminals, anything that is commonly touched by the public."

But how germ-filled are common objects? Let's start with money.

"Bad but not highly transmissible," he says.

Touch screens, devices and phones?

"Bad."

Restaurant menus?

"Really bad."

Doorknob handles?

"Really, really bad."

What about computer keyboards?

"Those have been shown over and over again to be really grossly contaminated," says Dr. Poland.

These common surfaces aren't just gross. They can be a [vehicle](#) to spread cold and flu viruses, and make us sick. Dr. Poland offers these suggestions to combat germ-filled objects:

"First, keep your hands out of your eyes, nose and mouth. Second is

either wash your hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer."

And make sure you get your annual flu vaccine.

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