



EUROPEAN TISSUE SYMPOSIUM

The European Tissue Paper Industry Association

Vereniging zonder winstoogmerk / Association sans but lucratif

Administrative office :

Kunstlaan 44 Avenue des Arts B-1040 Brussels

tel. 32-2-549.52.30

fax 32-2-502.15.98

Updated Full Consensus statement (Panel meeting 14 April 2015)

- The importance of hand washing with soap to prevent spread of infection is widely accepted by scientists. However, hand drying has received much less attention.
- Some harmful microbes remain on the hands after washing, and these are more easily spread around if hands are not dried adequately.
- Proper hand drying completes the hand washing process by reducing the risk of transmission of microbes.
- Generally available hand drying methods in public washrooms are based on either water absorption (single-use towels - paper or textile) or water dispersal (warm air or high velocity electric dryers).
- There is evidence that hand drying using single-use towels rather than electric dryers leads to lower numbers of microbes on hands and in the washroom (both in the air and on surfaces).
- Warm air dryers are less efficient than other methods at drying the hands. Damp hands are more likely to transfer microbes.
- High velocity air dryers are particularly likely to blow bacteria and viruses off the hands and across the washroom. These microbes could contaminate the user, other persons and the air and surfaces in the washroom. Microbes have been detected in the air for at least 15 minutes after the use of electric dryers.
- In conclusion, the choice of hand drying methods should take into account the risk of contaminating the hands, other individuals and the washroom, especially in settings where hygiene is very important.