



Handwashing and hand drying go hand-in-hand for long-term health

As Global Handwashing Day approaches remember proper hand drying is also key to optimal hygiene

Brussels, Belgium – October 12, 2016 – Global Handwashing Day on 15th October will promote the importance of handwashing with soap for long-term health. The global public-private partnership of government agencies, multilateral organisations, corporations, NGOs and academic institutions recognises hygiene as a pillar of international development and a priority behaviour that impacts public health, nutrition, education, economic development and equity.

The coalition of international stakeholders carries out crucial work in educating and motivating people to protect their own health and that of those around them through proper hand hygiene. The theme of this year's annual advocacy day is - '*Make Handwashing a Habit: ritual behaviour for long-term sustainability*'. It will focus on the importance of habit forming in good hygiene and is an opportunity to learn, design, test, replicate, and share creative ways to encourage people to wash their hands with soap at critical times.

European Tissue Symposium ([ETS](#)) fully supports the initiative and underlines the importance of proper hand drying alongside washing in completing the process and minimising the spread of infection. Microbes, such as viruses and bacteria, can survive on the hands for some time if they are not washed and dried effectively.

"Choice of hand drying method plays an important part in maintaining health," explains Roberto Berardi, Chairman of ETS. *"The body of research over many years shows that single-use towels offer the most hygienic solution for drying hands."*

Studies¹⁻³ show that microbes on hands can spread via water droplets during the drying process and contaminate the area and people nearby. Jet air dryers spread an average of 3005 virus particles up to 3 metres, with warm air dryers spreading an average of 104 over the 3 metre distance and paper towels spreading an average of just 15 virus particles over the same distance. Further research on airborne dispersal, surface contamination and the spread of microbes finds that jet air dryers disperse more microorganisms further and at different heights than other methods

"We would encourage people to build on the Global Handwashing Day theme and make hand drying with a paper towel a habit for a long-term health," concludes Roberto Berardi.

Ends

For further information on the spread of microbes during hand drying, please click here to view the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJPxvHPCPUJ>

About ETS

ETS is the European Tissue Paper Industry Association. The members of ETS represent the majority of tissue paper producers throughout Europe and around 90% of the total European tissue production. ETS was founded in 1971 and is based in Brussels. For more information www.europeantissue.com

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¹ December 2015 (reference: Kimmitt, P.T. & Redway, K.F. Evaluation of the potential for virus dispersal during hand drying: a comparison of three methods. *Journal of Applied Microbiology*. **120**, 478-486.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jam.13014/abstract>).

² *Comparison of different hand-drying methods: the potential for airborne microbe dispersal and contamination*

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<http://europeantissue.com/hygiene/studies/comparison-of-different-hand-drying-methods/>

³ *Microbiological comparison of hand drying methods: the potential for contamination of the environment, user and bystander*. E.L. Best,¹ P. Parnell,¹ M.H. Wilcox ^{1,2} – Microbiology Department, Old Medical School, Leeds General Infirmary, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust¹ & University of Leeds,² Leeds LS1 3EX, UK.

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