

Are hand dryers or paper towels better at stopping coronavirus?



Zoe Drewett Friday 6 Mar 2020 12:51 pm



The message has been loud and clear since the outbreak of coronavirus in the UK — we all need to be washing our hands properly and more frequently.

The NHS says washing our hands is one of the easiest ways to protect us from illnesses such as food poisoning and flu. It can help stop people picking up infections and spreading them to others and can also help to stop people spreading infections when visiting people in hospitals or healthcare settings who may be more at risk of being badly affected by coronavirus if they catch it.

Properly washing hands means spending at least 20 seconds using soap and warm water to clean palms, the backs of hands and in between fingers and thumbs. But what is the best way to dry your hands?

Many may opt for hand dryers that are automatic and therefore don't require touch — but health experts say paper towels are the best bet in order to prevent the spread of germs.

The World Health Organisation has said that hand dryers are not effective in killing coronavirus, but drying with a warm air dryer is fine.

It advises: To protect yourself against the new coronavirus, you should frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

'Once your hands are cleaned. you should dry them thoroughly by using paper towels or a warm air dryer.'

The NHS tells people to dry hands thoroughly with a disposable towel, before using the towel to turn off the tap after washing, to prevent someone touching germs again after cleaning.

Public Health England medical director prof Yvonne Doyle said: 'We are calling on everyone to help prevent the spread of coronavirus to help protect yourself and those around you.

our message is clear — simple hand washing with soap for 20 seconds is the key step we can all take to make a real difference in stopping this virus spread'



Shops across the UK have reported depleted stocks of toilet roll and hand sanitiser as people stock up (Picture: Getty)

You should wash your hands after using the toilet. changing a nappy. before and after handling and eating food and after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing, experts said.

Hands should also be washed before and after treating cuts or wounds. or touching and cleaning pets.

On Wednesday. the government launched an advertising campaign to drive home the importance of handwashing in the fight against coronavirus.

NHS officials have called it the 'single most important thing' Britons can do to protect themselves against Covid-19.

The adverts — rolled out across all media and billboards — tell Britons to scrub their hands after arriving from home or work. after they blow their nose. cough or sneeze. and before they eat or handle food.

This week the government released its 'battle plan' for beating the virus. with a strategy of phases to 'contain. delay. research. mitigate' the outbreak.

The UK is currently still in the 'contain' phase. but England's chief medical officer Chris Whiny has warned it is moving towards the 'delay' phase as the number of cases continues to rise.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will hold another emergency Cobra meeting on Monday to 'accelerate' work on moving into the delay phase after Downing Street warned it is 'highly likely' that the infection will 'spread in a significant way'.

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