

# Remember to Washy Washy your hands Clean

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HOW many Singaporeans does it take to stop the flu?

Answer: one – you.

If everyone sticks to a strict personal hygiene regime and uses common sense, the flu bug will find its wings seriously clipped.

But how easy is it to ensure that everyone plays his part?

Answer: Check out the H1N1 numbers after the first cases arrive here.

An indication of how well Singapore will do may come from a poll The New Paper did. Out of 100 people observed at public

toilets, only three washed their hands thoroughly as recommended in the Washy Washy Clean song, even if they did not know it at the time.

Does that tell you something?

Of the three people who washed their hands thoroughly, only one remembered the lessons from Sars days.

She was observed spending some time at the sink washing her hands, all the way to “above-the-wrist” level with soap and water.

Said the 57-year-old teacher counsellor, who wanted to be known only as Mrs Liu: “It has been my habit since Sars broke out a few years back. I wash my hands thoroughly for hygiene purposes.”

More than half of those polled (56) washed their hands only with water, while the majority of those who washed with soap, did so in a rushed and cursory manner (41).

For these people, the germs are still clinging on to their hands.

Imagine those same hands going around later, shaking hands perhaps or preparing food for others.

This must be the flu bug’s travel motto: Have dirty hands, will fly.

I know many public toilets here do not have properly outfitted soap dispensers.

But of the six toilets that The New Paper visited, all had soap dispensers.

Student Matthew Lim’s sentiment is probably shared by many of those who didn’t wash their hands properly.

Said the 20-year-old: “Siow ar! (Mad ah!) Washing your hands so much is just a waste of water. I honestly think that

if you just wash your hands with a bit of soap you will be fine. Washing for so long is probably just a waste of time. Just how clean can you get your hands to be?”

Well, according to scientists, most people get colds and other illnesses by touching a sick person or by touching something a sick person touched.

“Frequent handwashing is probably the single most effective and simplest

**RIGHT TECHNIQUE:**  
Washing correctly.



TNP PICTURE

intervention you can do to protect yourself and your family,” said Dr Judy Daly, spokesman for the American Society for Microbiology.

Influenza A viruses are fragile viruses that can be easily destroyed through proper hygiene, including use of soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitisers.

All you have to do to protect yourself is wash your hands – after you go to the bathroom, after you touch a cut or sore and always before

you touch food.

It is also good to practise washing your hands every time you get home. Those who take public transport would have touched buttons and other things which many hands have touched.

Does it also take a jingle to get more adults to do the right thing?

– Poll by Naveen Kanagalingam and Ervina Mohd Jamil