



70% men and 40% women don't wash hands with soap after toilet use

By Gregory Leow & Zubaidah Nazeer

WHEN it comes to toilet hygiene, both sexes were found wanting, but men were by far the worst.

Streets observed 50 men and 50 women in public loos and found that seven out of 10 men either simply zipped up and walked out or gave their hands a perfunctory rinse without using soap.

This action won't wash off the Sars virus.

Among the women, nearly four out of every 10 didn't wash their hands.

With the current Sars outbreak, this can be regarded as irresponsible behaviour, especially with repeated reminders for people to raise their hygiene standards.

Streets did its checks in the toilets of a shopping mall, an office building, a food court and a hawker centre.

All the toilets had soap and air hand-driers.

Of the 35 men who did not soap up, 23 did rinse their



hands. Only 12 out of 50 men scrubbed their hands with soap and water.

Retiree Jeffrey Chia, 65, who was seen walking out of a shopping mall toilet without

rinsing or soaping, said: "I'm in a hurry to head home."

"Normally I wash at home more often and I am not worried as I didn't touch anything."

Others, such as student Terry Lim, in his 20s, rinsed his hands without

using soap, ran his fingers through his hair and left the foodcourt toilet.

He told Streets he was also in a rush, as did another who was similarly remiss. Mr K C Leow.

A manager in the office building who wanted to be known as Ms Chew, 31, said:

"I have been using the sanitiser on my office table every few hours. And I didn't touch anything in the toilet anyway."

That was her excuse for being among nine out of 50 women observed not soaping or rinsing.

Another, who rushed out of the hawker centre toilet, said: "I can't take the smell of this place. I'll wash my

hands elsewhere."

But many among the 32 women who washed their hands scrupulously also used a piece of toilet tissue to push open toilet doors.

One of those was Ms Shirley Lee, 29, a fruit stall assistant.

She was seen washing her hands twice before adjusting her hair and washing her hands again, soaping up to the elbows.

She said: "I'm working in a food environment and I feel cleaner this way. I dare not eat the food if I know that

that person didn't wash her hands properly."

Another two Sars cases were confirmed yesterday, bringing the total to 186 since the start of the outbreak here.

Also, another six patients were discharged to join the ranks of 110 who have recovered from the disease.

Sixty Sars patients remain hospitalised, among whom 19 are in intensive care.

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