



Are Toilet Seat Covers Really Necessary?

When you enter a public bathroom and, on the wall, you see a dispenser filled with toilet seat covers...do you take one of them?

Hamlet was wrong. To cover or not to cover—that is the question!

On the one hand, there's an undeniable "ick factor" when it comes to sitting on top of something that countless bare-butt strangers have sat on before you—especially if you spot bits of water, urine or (worst of all) feces on the seat. So part of you is probably eager to do whatever you can to shield yourself from germs and avoid getting yourself wet and/or soiled.

But on the other hand, seat covers are generally made of porous tissue paper that is laughably thin. They have to be that thin, or they might clog toilets. And don't let the waxiness of the paper fool you—if there is liquid on the seat, it is likely to bleed through the cover. So another part of you is probably thinking, How protective can these covers truly be? And even if a germ does touch me, could I really get a disease that way?

So I went straight to the top of the heap to get to the, er, bottom of things, calling Charles Gerba, PhD, a professor of environmental microbiology at The University of Arizona in Tucson—because he is widely known as "Dr.

John Raye Goes Back Home

By John Raye

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national spokesman for the company. We relocated to North Carolina, leaving Washington, D.C., and the Forever Living Company.

Now, 25 years later, I'm heading back home—back to Forever living and the miracle-healing, kosher-balal certified Aloe Vera Gel, this God sent-product that extended my mother's life, and greatly impacted my life.

Miss Rosie, my wife of 50 years, has fully recovered from a massive right brain stroke. I am a 7-year cancer survivor. The late Warren Sledge who had been wheel-chair bound for 9 years, regain his ability to walk, a fact he attributed fully to the Aloe Vera gel.

Of course, we cannot make, as you know, any medical claims. But I know, my wife knows, Mr. Sledge's family knows, and many others can bear witness to the life-sustaining properties of the Forever Living Aloe Vera gel... the "real McCoy"

I know what I know—so after 25 years, I am back where I started; so this time there will be no second-guessing, no turning back. I am hear to sound the alarm. We are going to deal with some of these chronic health issues that have plagued our community far too long. And we

Germ" for his extensive research about bacteria and organisms covering public surfaces.

THE MUCK OF THE MATTER

In essence, here's what he told me: "I don't know of any scientific data on this specific topic, but based on my past germ research, in my opinion, most toilet seat covers are useless," he said.

First, we discussed what sort of germs you might find on a toilet seat. If you've bought into the common misconception that toilet seats carry sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), you've been fooled. The organisms that cause STDs, such as the viruses that cause herpes and AIDS and the bacteria that cause gonorrhea and syphilis, can't survive on cold, hard toilet seats for more than a few minutes, Dr. Gerba said. So by the time someone leaves a stall and you're ready to sit on the toilet, odds are, those types of germs are dead.

Other germs can survive on a toilet seat indefinitely, though—such as fecal bacteria (including *E. coli*) and the MRSA bacterium (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), which can be transferred from a person's skin to the toilet seat.

But how, exactly, would those types of germs infect you? "I suppose it's physiologically possible, but the chances of it happening are very, very slim," said Dr. Gerba.

For example, one way for fecal bacteria to be transmitted to your body would be for you to have an open sore—but you'd have to have an open sore on your buttocks or the back of your thighs in the specific place where the germ happens to be situated on the toilet seat. Another way would be by doing a poor wiping job—as you move a wad of toilet paper toward yourself, you accidentally brush by the toilet seat (collecting the germ) and then accidentally let the toilet paper touch your urethra. A third way? Perhaps you accidentally touch the toilet seat with your bare hands... don't wash your hands properly

are going to repair both our physical and financial health as well. I make no apologies for making money—after all this is a business, and the biggest business in America is the sick business.

Therefore, we are organizing a national team of Forever Living distributors/customers. We want you to join us. There is no joining or sign up fee. And you order as you see fit. No pressure, no hassle. Note these facts:

- Forever Living is now doing business in 150 countries.
- There are over 10 million Forever Living distributors worldwide
- There are over 300,000 distributors in Nigeria
- Nigeria was ranked no 4 in the world in total sales for 2011.

At this point I need you to google: Forever Living Products Nigeria. Then click on: ABOUT US. Study the site. Now, you tell me, we are here in America and totally absent from what is the biggest business in the Motherland! What's wrong with this picture? What does Mother Africa know that we here in the land of "the free, the brave and the broke"; do not know?

My goal now is to repeat what we did 25 years ago—to build the largest group of African-American distributors/customers in Forever Living. I declare that I will not be detained, denied, depressed or disappointed because I am given, "the NO word". In fact, the more "No's" I get, the more excited I become, which provides an opportunity for me to, "eliminate with extreme prejudice" such indi-

with soap and warm water after you finish going to the bathroom...and then later touch your nose or mouth and ingest the germ.

MRSA is a little more concerning, because research has shown that it can spread from simple skin-to-skin contact (as opposed to through a bodily opening), but Dr. Gerba said that even though it has been found on toilet seats in hospitals, there is no direct evidence proving that anyone has ever contracted MRSA by sitting on a toilet seat.

So, again, is it possible to get infected by a germ from putting your bare buns on a toilet seat? "Theoretically, yes, but realistically, no," said Dr. Gerba.

Even if the risk for infection were high, how much protection would a toilet seat cover provide? I talked with Dr. Gerba about how most toilet seat covers are porous, one-ply pieces of tissue and how bits of feces and urine (and therefore germs) can easily bleed through them. He said that a toilet seat cover is likely to provide protection only if it's not porous—so the only ones likely to protect you are those nonporous plastic covers that rotate around the seat before a new person sits down (the bathrooms in Yankee Stadium in New York City, for example, have these, as well those in the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport in Louisiana).

WORRY ABOUT YOUR KITCHEN, NOT YOUR BATHROOM

Dr. Gerba left me with this food for thought: According to his research, far more dangerous germs exist on kitchen surfaces, such as sinks and counters, than on toilet seats, whether in public or at home. *E. coli* bacteria, for example, are 200 times more prevalent on cutting boards than toilet seats, he said. "It's actually safer to make a sandwich on a typical toilet seat than a typical cutting board," he said.

Hmm...no thanks! I'll keep cooking in the kitchen!

viduals from my address book (no pun intended).

As I celebrate my 72 birthday, I clearly do not intend to beg, bagger, bug or bother anyone. I'm only dealing with the ready, willing and able. So here's my offer.

Go to this site and sign on with us:

johnrayelivingright.myflpbiz.com

Sign up. There is no fee to sign up. You are under no pressure or obligated to, "buy something every month". You purchase everything at wholesale cost, same as me... and whenever you feel the need to do so.

If you are not feeling well, physically or financially, then you need to get with me, or be a blessing to someone, somewhere in this country. This is a "we thing" not an "I thing" I am fully aware of the fact that my return to Forever Living after an absence of 25 years is nothing short of an act of God. I am being obedient and following my spirit.

If you are willing to join our team, I would appreciate an immediate response. Please know this is grown folk business, so your response, whatever it might be, "will not hurt my feelings!" It's just time folks, as my momma would often say, "to spit of get off the spot". Now, that's my momma's talk. Not my talk. But I agree with her.

—John Raye, a national health-wellness-business coach, is a 7-year cancer survivor. He and Miss Rosie, live in Kernersville, NC (rayeandrosie@aol.com) 336-782-8383