

Coronavirus

Cleaning tips for your cellphone

■ Health officials recommend you frequently sanitize your cellphone

By Alison Bowen
Chicago Tribune

Beyond our faces, what do we touch all the time? Our phones.

While the coronavirus most frequently spreads among close contacts via respiratory droplets and transmission to persons from contaminated surfaces has not been documented, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health officials encourage cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces because the virus can remain viable for hours to days on a variety of materials.

This includes your phone.

Cleaning, the CDC specified, refers to the removal of germs, dirt and impurities, and it does not kill germs, but by removing them does lower the risk of spreading infection. Disinfecting, on the other hand, refers to using chemicals to kill germs.

The agency recommends using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Regarding Apple products, the company issued recommendations for cleaning.

All products, according



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to Apple, can be gently cleaned with the a 70% isopropyl alcohol wipe or Clorox disinfecting wipe. Wipe the hard, nonporous surfaces, like the display, keyboard or other exterior surfaces.

The key to remember? Do not use bleach. And avoid getting moisture in any openings of the phone. Do not submerge the product in a cleaning product.

Apple does note that excessive wiping could cause damage.

If you get liquid inside the phone, Apple recom-

mends getting help from an authorized service provider or Apple store.

And don't forget about your iPhone case. Apple provides specific instructions for several types — silicone, leather, clear — but generally, remove the iPhone from the case and use a clean cloth to wipe the inside. Different cleaners can be used on different materials.

Sheila Leen, an advanced practice nurse at Rush University, pointed out that we take phones everywhere, including to the bathroom.

"At least toilet seats are usually receiving a regular cleaning," she said in an email.

Sanitize once a day, and clean it an extra time if dropped, placed on a public surface or coughed on. She suggested smartphone wipes, a damp and soft microfiber cloth with 60% water and 40% alcohol, or the product PhoneSoap that says it uses UV light to clean 99.9% of germs.

Wipe back and sides, she added, and remove from its case at least once a month to clean that too.

Lag in virus testing 'a failing' top official says

By Mike Stobbe
and Matthew Perrone
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. lag in coronavirus testing is "a failing," a top federal health official said Thursday, and public health experts say they still don't have a good understanding of how widely the new virus has spread.

The effort initially was hobbled by delays in getting testing kits out to public health labs, but the stumbles have continued, leading scientists to conclude that the virus has already spread far wider than government officials are reporting.

U.S. health officials, for example, promised nearly a month ago to tap into a national network of labs that monitor for flu. That system still isn't up and running.

On Thursday, Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health agreed that the U.S. needs to improve how it's testing.

"The system is not really geared to what we need right now," he said. "That is a failing. It is a failing, let's admit it."

Large-scale testing is a critical part of tracking the spread of infectious diseases and allocating resources for treatment.

The lack of comprehensive figures means U.S. health

providers could quickly be overwhelmed by undetected cases.

As of Thursday afternoon, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was reporting about 1,260 U.S. illnesses — a number that trailed independent researchers, who are adding reports from individual states more quickly.

But some experts believe any number based on test results of individual patients is a dramatic undercount. Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles this week estimated that the true count of infections was close to 9,000 — about two weeks ago.

"I expect there are more infected individuals now," said one of the researchers, Dr. Jonathan Braun. "This means that the level of disease in the US is much greater than has been reported by actual testing."

The problem, these experts say: the U.S. simply isn't testing enough people.

There are no official numbers from the federal government on the country's overall testing capacity. One of the only comprehensive estimates comes from Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former FDA commissioner who is now a resident fellow at the American

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Use these tip to keep a spotless kitchen

■ 'Cooking clean' much easier when you start clean

By Genevieve Ko
Los Angeles Times

One of the most daunting things about cooking at home isn't cooking at all: It's cleaning.

One of the hallmarks — points of pride, really — of great professional kitchens is spotlessness. That's why chefs wear chefs' whites; you can't get away with a single splatter.

An often-heard mantra is "cook clean," which means both literally clean and also organized and uncluttered. When ingredients, tools and equipment are clean and orderly, it's much easier to execute a recipe.

Restaurant kitchens have the obvious advantage of dedicated dishwashers, but home kitchens offer a space that's all your own. You can control exactly how clean you keep everything.

I've combined my experiences cooking professionally with my life in a home kitchen (and my type-A instincts) to offer eight tips on cooking clean at home:

1. Start clean. It's hard to find the headspace to prepare a meal when your physical space is a mess. Wash any lingering dishes; empty the sink, dishwasher and dish rack; clear the counters, then wipe them down with kitchen cleaner; scrub the stove if splattered.

2. Wash your hands all the time. I confess that I'm an obsessive hand washer. I wash with soap and water before cooking, and throughout prep and cooking, whenever my hands are oily or floured



Dreamstime

When you're trying to "cook clean," it helps to start clean.

or have anything on them. You should too.

3. Set up for a clean routine. Take out a clean, dry dish towel to swipe away crumbs (and use as a pot holder). Soak another dish towel with dish soap and water and squeeze out excess liquid. You'll use this to wipe away sticky spills or grease splatters. Some cooks like sanitizing wipes, but soap and water do the trick and a trip through the laundry is all the towels need to be clean and ready again.

4. Have a trash plan. Pull your kitchen trash can next to where you'll be working or, if you have enough counter space, have a large bowl near at hand that you can put trimmings and other to-be-discarded items in.

5. Clean as you cook. It's tempting to dump everything in the sink to do later, but that will leave you with a wobbly pile of dirtiness that lurks over you as you try to concentrate on a recipe. Instead, trash or compost or recycle scraps (carrot peels) or garbage (an empty pasta box) as you work and use those five minutes of simmering time to get ahead on the dishes.

6. Prevent cross-contamination. You don't want any raw meat to touch anything else. If possible, dedicate a cutting board to vegetables and one to meat. It's OK if you don't, just be sure to wash the boards thoroughly between uses. You can wear disposable gloves when prepping meat or seafood as I do, discarding them after use.

7. Don't double-dip when tasting. It's important to taste your food as you cook to ensure the seasonings are right and to check for doneness.

While it may seem romantic to sip sauce from the spoon with which you're stirring, it's also gross. If you're cooking for yourself, you can, of course. But if you're cooking for anyone else — even family — use a separate spoon, dip it in only once, and wash it before tasting from it again.

8. Quick rinse before eating. All the gunk on just-used bowls, pans and other cooking tools comes off much easier when still warm, so give it all a quick spray before sitting down to eat. Otherwise, you may find yourself scrubbing extra hard later on.

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