



DRYING HANDS THE ECO-HEALTHY WAY



ARE HAND DRYERS BETTER THAN PAPER TOWELS?

Hand dryers have been marketed as the eco-friendly alternative to paper towels. They reduce waste, and save money because they last 7-10 years and eliminate the need to constantly purchase new paper towels. A cost benefit analysis showed that hand dryers pay for themselves in an average of 7 months, and the findings accounted for their energy use too!

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS WITH HAND DRYERS?

- They can be noisy and add to noise pollution.
- They can be ineffective at drying. Low speed dryers especially require longer use time so most people don't fully dry their hands when using one (moisture spreads bacteria).
- They can spread bacteria. Powerful jet air dryers can blast bacteria from poorly washed hands into the air.



PURCHASING A HAND DRYER: IMPORTANT FEATURES TO LOOK FOR

- Antibacterial coatings (without the use of chemicals).
- Automatic dryers with infrared sensors.
- HEPA filters that clean the air used for drying.
- Customizable hand dryers could encourage children to use hand dryers for an adequate amount of time by making it a fun experience.
- A timer might also help children use the hand dryer for long enough to reduce bacteria effectively.



DRYING HANDS WITH TOWELS

Reusable cloth towels reduce waste and costs by eliminating the need to re-purchase paper towels. They dry hands faster than an air dryer would, reducing the risk of spreading bacteria. The friction from the towel also helps remove bacteria, and there is no cross contamination risk like the jet air dryer that can disperse bacteria into the air.

Note: each child should use their own hand towel, to avoid the spreading of germs. Offering hooks labeled with each child's name allows children to use their own towel, while also teaching them their name recognition. Additionally, children take on the responsibility of caring for the tidiness of their environment by re-hanging their towels and picking up after themselves.

The downside to reusable cloth towels is increased water use since the towels need to be laundered daily. This must be done to ensure cleanliness because moist towels harbor bacteria. To reduce energy and water use, large laundry loads should be done - where towels can be combined with other items that need washing.



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