

Our Position on Anti-bacterial Products

After careful consideration of the issues, we at Clean Trend have chosen NOT to sell such products.

The world is teeming with bacteria. The bacteria which get all the attention are the bad, pathogenic ones. But not all bacteria cause disease; many are even beneficial for us and the environment:

- The soil is full of free-living bacteria which help with biodegradation.
- Our bodies are hosts to beneficial as well as some pathogenic bacteria (called normal flora). The “good” bacteria competes with the “bad” bacteria, thereby keeping them in check.
- Some normal flora produce essential elements (e.g. the gut flora produces vitamin K).
- Almost 10% of human body weight. Each square centimeter of skin has an average of 100,000 organisms while 50% of the content of the colon is made up of bacteria.

According to The Medical Post, the AMA’s council on scientific affairs issued a report in June,2000 after a year-long study, recommending that antimicrobials for which acquired resistance has been demonstrated in bacteria not be used in consumer products “unless data emerge to conclusively show that such resistance has no impact on public health and that such products are effective in preventing infection. The AMA House of Delegates adopted the council’s recommendations at its June, 2000 meeting.

The report focused on ingredients called the anilides (e.g. triclocarban), the bis-phenols (e.g. triclosan), the quaternary ammonium compounds (e.g. cetylpyridium chloride) and the bigualides (e.g. chlorhexidine). These ingredients are commonly used in topical over-the-counter antimicrobial consumer products such as soaps and lotions.

“Published reports on acquired resistance to these antimicrobial agents, coupled with their increased use in consumer products, suggest a change may be occurring in the microbial flora of the home, specifically through the selection of resistant organisms,” the report said. “Additionally, the possibility that the selection of organisms resistant to antimicrobials such as triclosan and chlorhexidine also may predispose these organisms to resistance against therapeutic antibiotics is troubling.”

According to the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), one of the manageable causes of antimicrobial resistance is “overuse and misuse of antimicrobial agents in humans, food animals, agriculture and consumer products.”

Use of antibacterial products is problematic because:

- Improper use of the products (e.g. not washing long enough) is not eliminating the bacteria; instead, the surviving bacteria are strong and will mutate to avoid the

antibacterial ingredient, creating super-bacteria (super-germs) that are antibiotic resistant. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has strongly recommended that use of anti-bacterial cleaning solutions be discontinued because bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics.

- While most of the resistant bacteria do not cause harm to us, their resistance traits are often transferable to other, harmful bacteria with which they come into contact. The reservoirs of resistant genes in our environment increase with each use of antibiotics.
- We are eliminating good bacteria, too. Bacterial-based septic systems are negatively impacted. When these antibiotics are released into the waste stream, they are also causing problems in the environment where good bacteria carry out a myriad of functions, including biodegradation.
- The antibacterial ingredient in soaps causes significant skin irritation.
- The antibacterial ingredient has no effect on viruses, and may actually help them grow/multiply by reducing bacterial competition.
- The antimicrobial agent triclosan is a strong inhibitor of an enzyme present in many microorganisms. "This enzyme is also potentially important as a target for new antibiotics, raising concerns that the use of triclosan may make these drugs ineffective," according to Dr. Joseph Mercola, D.O.
- A recent study in Italy found that exposure to bacteria is essential for development of an infant's immune system. Dr. Stuart Levy, a microbiologist at Tufts University, states that a baby must be exposed to germs during its first year in order to develop antibodies needed to fight infection later in life."

According to Dr. Eli N. Perencevich of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts, "research has shown that the actual action of washing is the most important thing when it comes to removing bacteria from the hands, and there is no scientific evidence that adding compounds like triclosan to household soaps prevents infections."

Sources:

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