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Historical Facts About Hygiene

It is speculated that the Greek hygiene and Health development began from influences of the Celts. The world's first hospital situated in Armagh, Ireland was built before 650 BC by Queen Macha.

The word hygiene comes from the Greek goddess of health and cleanliness called Hygieia. Her father Asclepius (the father of medicine) was more directly associated with healing, while Hygieia was associated with the prevention of sickness and the maintaining of good health. The cult of Hygieia as an independent goddess did not begin to spread out until the Oracle at Delphi recognized her, and after the devastating Athens plague in 429 and 427 BC. She was often depicted as a young woman feeding a large snake that was wrapped around her body.

Hygiene in America

In 1843, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. pushed for basic sanitation in hospitals. However he met with widespread disdain. For example, a prominent American obstetrician argued that doctors are gentlemen, and gentlemen's hands are clean.

Up to a quarter of all women giving birth in European and American hospitals in the 17th through 19th centuries died of puerperal fever, an infection spread by unhygienic nurses and doctors.

President James Garfield was fatally shot on July 2, 1881. However it is believed that Garfield did not die from the bullet, rather from the infection caused by the medical team who had manure-stained hands!

Washing Your Hands

People accumulate germs on their hands from direct contact with people, surfaces, foods, even animals and animal waste. By not washing the hands frequently, you could infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Also by touching surfaces (doorknobs, etc.) you can infect others with the common cold, flu and gastrointestinal disorders.

Germs and Soap

1,000 species of bacteria are known to reside in the human body. There are more total number germs on your body than people in the United States. Studies at the University of Michigan School of Public Health found that washing hands with an antibacterial soap was no more effective in preventing infectious illness than plain soap (including reducing bacteria on the hands).

In addition, triclosan (the ingredient in anti-bacterial soaps) has potential negative effects on your body. Researchers say triclosan may cause some bacteria to develop resistance to commonly used antibiotics such as amoxicillin. Furthermore, triclosan works by focusing on a biochemical pathway in the bacteria, which enables the bacteria to maintain its cell wall intact. Due to the manner in which triclosan kills the bacteria, mutations can occur at the targeted site.

Hospitals

Recently, University of Arizona microbiology researchers have determined that television remotes are the worst carriers of bacteria in hospital rooms, even worse than toilet handles! Remotes spread antibiotic-resistant *Staphylococcus*, which contributes to the 90,000 annual deaths. Even more disturbing is the detection of *Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) on the remote control. As an antibiotic-resistant bacteria, MRSA is a leading cause of infection and death in hospitals.

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Sources: Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org)