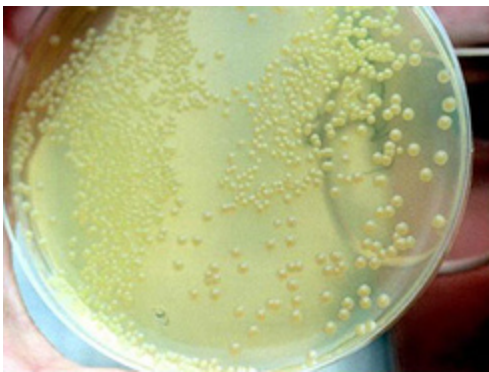


Bad Bacteria Lurk In Highway Rest Stops

Disease-Causing Germs Have Spread Staph Infections And E. Coli In Public Restrooms Across The Country



The E.coli bacterium (AP)

(WebMD) It may come as no surprise to the travel-wise, but public restrooms along America's highways are indeed a haven for potentially dangerous bacteria.

The latest evidence comes from a study presented this week at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology.

Researchers collected swab samples from places people normally touch in public bathrooms, such as restroom door handles, toilet stall handles, toilet

flush handles, sink handles, towel dispenser handles, and blow dryer handles, at travel and rest stops along major interstate highways in the Southwest.

Their results showed the presence of many different bacteria, such as staph bacteria and E. coli. MRSA (methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), a difficult to treat type of staph that can cause potentially life-threatening infection, was found in 10 of the 47 samples taken.

"This study emphasizes the importance of washing your hands after using restrooms," says researcher Keith Sternes, PhD, of Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, in a news release. "It is advisable for individuals using any public restroom at rest stops or anywhere should carefully and diligently wash their hands and use a towel or other type of device to cover their hands when exiting the restrooms. This would help to prevent recontamination by pathogenic bacteria and lessen the chances of infection of themselves or others."

By Jennifer Warner

Reviewed by Louise Chang

©2005-2008 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.

More From Health

- [14 Strangest Beauty Treatments You Won't Believe](#)
- [Ambien Addiction: Are Celebrities Playing with Fire?](#)
- [Avastin a No-Go For Breast Cancer, Says FDA Panel](#)
- [Is Medical Marijuana Going Big Business in California?](#)
- [World's Most Extreme Body Modifications: Spiritual or Sick?](#)



- [Play CBS Video](#)

[Cross-Country Biking for Blindness](#)

A father and his son, who is losing his sight, biked from Calif. to New York City to raise money for a cure for blindness.

- [Cryptococcus Gattii - Fungus Among Us Is Deadly Serious](#)
- [Poll: Should Fat People Pay More for Health Insurance?](#)
- [Cross-Country Biking for Blindness](#)
- [Pet Health Insurance: Will Your Pet's Illness Make You Broke?](#)
- [Secret Sex Lives of Men: Health Survey Shocks Senses](#)
- [Obama, Clinton Pledge US Support For AIDS Fight](#)

Connect with CBS News [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [X](#)