DOES WEARING GLOVES PROTECT YOU FROM COVID-19?

Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing. The best way to keep your hands clean and germ-free is to wash them frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

During this pandemic, you have probably seen people wearing disposable gloves (made of materials such as vinyl, latex, or nitryl) while you are out in public. You may think they are being extra cautious or wonder if you should wear them too. Here are the facts about gloves:

1. Gloves can spread germs if they are not used correctly.

- You should always put on clean gloves; they should not be reused.
- Gloves help keep your hands clean, so you do not come into direct contact with germs, such as the COVID-19 virus. The gloves, however, may touch germs if the person wearing the gloves touches a surface such as a grocery cart, door handle, or other object that has germs on it.
- If the person wearing the gloves then touches another surface, they can spread those germs to those surfaces.

2. You may not be protecting yourself from germs either.

- Gloves may not be a complete barrier; they may have very tiny holes in them that you cannot see but that germs can pass through.
- It is possible for germs on the outside of the gloves to seep inside.
- Gloves can be torn by fingernails, jewelry, or other objects or be damaged through wear and tear depending on how they are used or how long they are worn.
- Gloves can also break down and be damaged by heat, moisture, or chemicals.
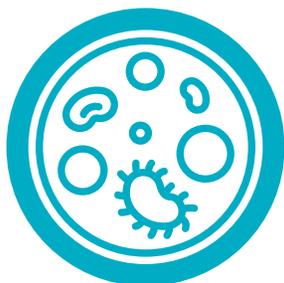
3. Gloves can give you a false sense of safety and protection.

- Often times, people wearing gloves (who do not normally wear them as part of their job), may feel so comfortable with the barrier that is created that they touch everything without much thought, including their face, which is a common way for germs to enter the body and cause infections.
- Gloves, unlike hands, cannot be washed. Since the outside of gloves can get germs on them, they may be more contaminated than bare hands. You should always keep your hands away from your face as much as possible.

If you do use gloves, make sure you are using them correctly and that you wash your hands after removing them. Learn more about correct glove removal.

For local information and daily updates on COVID-19, please visit:
www.coronavirus-sd.com

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