Hand Sanitation in Rutgers Recreation Facilities

In order to improve sanitation at Rutgers University, Hand sanitation stations have to be installed throughout the recreational facilities

Tag Words: Hand Sanitation, Rutgers University, Recreation Centers

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Summary

Germ transmission is gaining attention at Recreation Facilities because of large groups of people using common equipment and touching common areas, and in doing so, contributing to spreading viruses and bacteria such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), H1N1, stomach flus/viruses, and common colds. Proper sanitation of equipment and hands can be used as preventative measures against these germs.
The Issue: Germ Transmission Caused by Poor Sanitation at Rutgers Recreation Facilities.

(Yanela) Having been at Rutgers University for the past four years and using the recreation facilities fairly often, it has come to my attention that sanitation around the recreation center it’s not the best possible. Although there are sanitation sprays at certain locations throughout the gym, they are not sufficient and something has to be done to improve sanitation, not only for the health of the students who frequent the gym but also for the people who work there. According to UC sports dermatologist Brian Adams, MD, It’s important to keep gym equipment clean and free of germs in places such as community gyms that are open to large groups of people. (4)

(Julianne) Hand-washing with soap and water is important to prevent transmission of colds, flus, infections, etc. Hand-washing throughout the day rarely happens, unless maybe an individual uses the restroom – and even then it may not get done. Hand sanitizers, such as Purell® can be used synonymously to hand-washing, and can be more effective because they can be placed conveniently throughout buildings.

(Yanela) Gyms and recreation centers can be breeding grounds for many diseases, viruses, fungi and bacteria. If the cardiovascular machines or strength training equipments are not sanitized properly these diseases, viruses, fungi and bacteria can be transfer from person to person. Data has been published showing that powerful bacteria, such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) has become an issue among athletes and in gyms (4).

(Yanela) MRSA is an infection caused by bacteria that is highly resistant to some antibiotics. As previously mentioned, this infection is mainly found in hospitals. However, recently this dangerous infection has been found in gyms and athletic environments. This infection can be life threatening and very dangerous. Another potentially life threatening virus is the Influenza A (H1N1) virus, most commonly known as, swine flu. This virus can be easily transferred from machine to machine and spread to everyone who uses that machine, if it’s not sanitized properly. Recently, there was an outbreak of H1N1 that caused many deaths all around the world and the World Health Organization declared it as a pandemic. Stomach viruses are also fairly common, as well as athlete’s foot and many other skin infections and diseases.1,3

(Julianne) Disinfectant spray alone (assuming individuals actually use it after working out) won’t protect against germ transmission from hands, sweat, etc, that can be caught from doorknobs, handrails, etc. Adams also suggests while in gyms and touching common equipment to frequently use hand sanitizers which are known to kill up to 99.9% of disease-causing bacteria on skin (4). Hand sanitation stations are not found in any of Rutgers’ Recreation Facilities, therefore creating a germ transmission problem. Even if individuals wash their hands after a workout, they have most likely touched a doorknob, handrail, water fountain, or any other communal area in the facility.
The Service Project

(Julianne & Yanela) Our goal is to have Rutgers University provide each Recreation facility in the University with hand sanitation stations that are sufficient enough to protect each student from germ-transmission taking place in gyms. Part of this goal includes continuing to refill hand sanitation stations as needed. As a secondary goal, sanitation sprays should be kept full and located in several locations in each recreation facility.

The first step in our service project was contacting Rutgers Maintenance Facilities and after several attempts we received information about the commonality of hand sanitation stations throughout Rutgers. They informed us no hand sanitation stations were located in any of the Rutgers Recreation Facilities. We also proposed installing at least two hand sanitation stations in each Rutgers Recreation Facility, but the individual on the phone did not have the proper authority to make this decision, and we were told to call back at a later time. In further attempt to reach the proper party, we came to the conclusion we should e-mail several maintenance directors, including Dianne Gravatt (Director, Environmental Services & Grounds), Boyd Moore (Assistant Director, Environmental Services & Grounds), Tom Cunningham (Operations Area Manager, Busch/Livingston Campus), and Sharon Martin (Assistant Director of Campus Housing). Attached are the e-mails sent, as well as one reply from Dianne Gravatt. She informed us that this project would not be ideal, because of time, budget, and damage that would result from drippings from Purell® dispensers.

In addition to contacting Rutgers Maintenance Facilities, we have also called Purell® several times with no luck, regarding expenses to install and maintain at least 2 hand sanitation stations in each Rutgers Recreation Facility. We have also e-mailed Purell® through their website (confirmation is below) in hopes of getting a more rapid reply. Purell informed us we needed to contact “Gojo®”, which makes Skin and Health Hygiene products. After calling Gojo®, they informed me they only make the product, they do not distribute it. We received a number for a distributor in New Jersey, APP Inc. Upon calling APP Inc., the woman was not able to release pricing information without contact information from Rutgers and ourselves that we were not able to provide.

We have made flyers to be posted around all Rutgers campuses in hopes of spreading the word about the importance of hand sanitation through washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer. Flyers will reinforce the installation of Purell® stations at Recreation Centers at Rutgers.

Julianne: As an employee of the Cook/Douglass Recreation Facility, I have brought it to the attention of building managers that more sanitation sprays should be provided in additional locations throughout the gyms to promote more frequent use.

In conclusion, this specific proposed project would not be ideal, but small changes can make it effective, such as asking Recreation Facilities to provide more sanitation sprays and encouraging gym users to wash hands frequently. Posters can still be displayed encouraging hand washing.
References

Editorials

Dear Editor,

There has been a recent worldwide uproar about a new flu virus, H1N1. Rutgers University has taken a few measures in H1N1 prevention, such as vaccine distribution and prevention information. A few (the number can possibly be counted solely on fingers) hand sanitation stations have been installed in a couple campus buildings. However, sanitation stations are rarely refilled, making this motion irrelevant. A simple and relatively inexpensive solution to prevention of H1N1 as well as many other bacteria, viruses and flus and colds, is through proper hand hygiene.

Recreation Centers are breeding grounds for germ transmission through sweat and many individuals sharing equipment and touching common areas such as doorknobs and hand-rails. According to The Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, a dangerous antibiotic-resistant bacteria—methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)—is becoming more prevalent among athletes and in recreation facilities. These germs can be easily transmitted through equipment that is used by large groups and not sanitized properly.

Encouraging Rutgers University Recreation Centers to install hand sanitation stations in their facilities will effectively reduce the incidence of flus and germs spreading between gym users. The convenient location of sanitation stations throughout recreation facilities will most likely lead to proper hand hygiene. Gym users should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer and/or thoroughly wash their hands with soap and warm water, as well as use disinfectant spray on gym equipment after completion of their workout.

Easy and simple measures can be taken to minimize the amount and severity of colds and flus spreading throughout large campus communities, such as Rutgers. Wash/sanitize your hands; disinfect machines after workouts.

Sincerely,

Julianne Jamgochian

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Yanela Arias

IMPROVING HAND SANITATION AT RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

My name is Yanela Arias; I’m a student at Cook College- Rutgers University. Throughout my four year at this university I have been a frequent user of the recreational facilities the school has to offer. However, it has come to my attention that the sanitation in these facilities needs more of an improvement. Although the gym provides us with sprays and paper towels to wipe the machines after using them, it is not sufficient. Have you ever gotten on an elliptical and questioned if it really was cleaned properly? Or if the bacteria and germs of someone else are still on the machine? Personally, I ask myself these questions all the time. I don’t think everyone wipes down the machines properly, which can lead to a lot of diseases,
sicknesses, etc. If the recreational facilities were to provide hand sanitation stations fully equipped with products like Purell, sanitation would greatly improve. Lately, there have been a lot of diseases surfacing in our environment whether it was something as serious as the H1N1 virus or not as life threatening like the stomach flu. It is important the university does everything necessary to protect its students. Although providing these hand sanitations might be an added cost to the university’s already decreasing budget, it is something that it is important to the health of everyone that attends Rutgers University.

By adding these hand sanitation stations throughout the recreational facilities not only is going to improve the sanitation of the gym but it will also cause a decrease in sickness, and less students frequenting the health centers. It also provides students and faculty with the peace of mind that when they use a machine, they are using a machine that is clean.
To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Cook/Douglass Student here at Rutgers and have written an editorial regarding hand hygiene at Rutgers Recreation Facilities. The editorial is part of a group project for the Junior/Senior Colloquium: Ethics in Science. My editorial is attached.

Thank you for your time,
-Julianne Jamgochian

To whom it may concern,

My name is Yanela Arias. The reason for this e-mail is regarding a class project for a Rutgers class called Ethics in Science. The purpose of this project was to create a service project that would benefit someone else. The group members and I decided that Rutgers and Hand sanitation would be a good idea especially in the recreation centers. Our main goal was to get Rutgers to provide all recreation centers with Hand Sanitation stations, equipped with products like Purell. In the file attached you will be able to see more regarding our project. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Yanela Arias
Hi Ms. Gravatt,

I am in a class called Ethics in Science, which requires a service project for the course. My group's idea was to implement hand sanitation (Purell) stations in all Recreation Facilities on the New Brunswick Campuses. If this is a possibility, how expensive would it be? If there is someone else I should be contacting regarding this, please let me know. I have attached the project.

I appreciate your time,
Julianne Jamgochian

Hello Boyd Moore,

I am in a class called Ethics in Science, which requires a service project for the course. My group's idea was to implement hand sanitation (Purell) stations in all Recreation Facilities on the New Brunswick Campuses. If this is a possibility, how expensive would it be? If there is someone else I should be contacting regarding this, please let me know. I have attached the project.

I appreciate your time,
Julianne Jamgochian
Hello Mr. Cunningham,

I am in a class called Ethics in Science, which requires a service project for the course. My group's idea was to implement hand sanitation (Purell) stations in all Recreation Facilities on the New Brunswick Campuses. If this is a possibility, how expensive would it be? If there is someone else I should be contacting regarding this, please let me know. I have attached the project.

I appreciate your time,
Julianne Jamgochian

Hello Ms. Sharon Martin,

I am in a class called Ethics in Science, which requires a service project for the course. My group's idea was to implement hand sanitation (Purell) stations in all Recreation Facilities on the New Brunswick Campuses. If this is a possibility, how expensive would it be? If there is someone else I should be contacting regarding this, please let me know. Our group project is attached.
I appreciate your time,
Yanela Arias
Thank You

If you would prefer to contact us by telephone, please call our Consumer Information Center at 1-888-4PURELL (1-888-478-7355).

If your question is of a medical nature or pertains to a medical emergency, please seek medical advice by calling your doctor or local poison control center.

From: Dianne Gravatt  <dgravatt@facilities.rutgers.edu>
Reply-To: 
To: Julianne Jamgochian  <julejam@eden.rutgers.edu>
Cc: 
Subject: RE: Regarding Facilities/Maintenance, Please respond ASAP.
Date: Wed Apr 21 09:37:01 EDT 2010

Julianne, unfortunately we do not and would not support this type of project as the material utilized would not provide any better disinfecting than simply washing your hands and this approach is total bacteria kill both good and bad.

In addition the material drips from the containers onto floors and literally eats away the sealer making the job of the custodial staff twice as difficult in maintaining the floor.

Last but not least this increases the work for the custodian, would create a large expense and require constant monitoring.

Dispensers Cost Approximately $50 each
Unit Cost of each filler bag is $8 - 9 for an 8 liter bag
These costs do not include labor which is $18 per hour.
Dianne
Did you know? Washing your hands or using hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day can help prevent germ transmission and getting sick?
Wash your hands now!!!!