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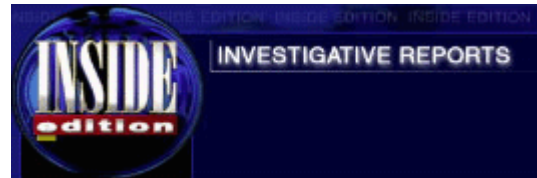
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Germ and Shopping Carts

Shopping carts are dirtier than most public washrooms. This is because they are identified as a germ hot spot and so are cleaned and disinfected daily. However, many people don't recognize the potential of a shopping cart to accrue harmful bacteria. Grocery stores clean their shopping carts as little as a couple of times.

A shopping cart is daily exposed to E. Coli. Saliva, blood, fecal matter, and mucus have been found on cart handles. Therefore, be sure to protect your child from harmful bacteria when taking a trip to the grocery store.



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INSIDE EDITION INVESTIGATION REVEALS SUPERMARKET SHOPPING CARTS COVERED WITH HARMFUL BACTERIA THAT CAN SICKEN SHOPPERS OR CHILDREN

University Expert: Carts Can Be Dirtier Than Public Bathrooms

An *Inside Edition* investigation found disturbing evidence that supermarket shopping carts can expose shoppers – including small children who often ride in them – to harmful bacteria.

In a typical day, a supermarket cart can be exposed to the drippings from raw meat and produce, and even young children still in diapers.

Dr. Kelly Reynolds, a microbiologist with the University of Arizona, tells us that shopping carts are all are sources of contamination.

"You need to be aware that there could be harmful bacteria from raw produce, and harmful viruses from people's hands that have been sick shopping cart handles."

Inside Edition tested 30 carts at nine supermarkets to find what germs were on them.

The syndicated newsmagazine tested carts with young children in them and focusing on the areas most likely touched, like the handles and armrests and the seats. The swabs were sent to an independent lab and tested for bacteria and fungus that can cause disease.



Inside Edition's lab found several types of bacteria and fungus that could cause disease, especially in people with fragile immune systems like children. The most serious bacteria found was *enterococcus faecalis* – indicating the presence of fecal matter.

Dr. Reynolds tells *Inside Edition* she wasn't surprised by the results. She tested shopping carts as part of a university study on germs.

"Our study and your study seem to indicate that shopping carts are frequently contaminated."

On some carts, Dr. Reynolds found bodily fluids like blood, mucus and says the shopping carts she tested were dirtier than public bathrooms.

"The fact is, bathrooms are frequently cleaned and disinfected, shopping carts are not," Dr. Reynolds told *Inside Edition*.

To demonstrate how the germs get from the cart to the shopper or their child, *Inside Edition* coated a cart with a fluorescent marker. Anyone touching that cart would get a mark only visible under a black light. Then that cart was used on a shopping expedition with Margo Drucker, of New York City, and her four-year-old son.

With *Inside Edition* cameras rolling, it didn't take long before Jonah was marked on his face, areas around his mouth, forehead and eyes. His mother even placed a kiss on his forehead after she touched the handle.

Then *Inside Edition* brought Jonah and his mother back to the show's set. They turned out all lights except for the black light. He had markings from the cart all over his face, clothes and hands.

"Oh God, look at that. I'm shocked, this is very unnerving," Drucker said.

Inside Edition reports the solution that could prevent germs from being transferred from cart handles to a shopper or their child may be very simple -- sanitizing carts to clean the hot spots.

Gelson Markets of California is one of the few supermarket chains that address this problem. General manager Tim Redman tells *Inside Edition*: "Sanitation is an important part of what we want to offer our customers."

Inside Edition contacted ten of the largest supermarket chains in the country to find out what they do to clean their carts. Two responded, saying they clean their carts several times a year. One supermarket pointed out that they have never heard of an instance of illness attributed to shopping carts.

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