

French lax on routine hygiene, study suggests

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As France braces for a surge in cases of the new coronavirus, which is spread mainly by poor hygiene, a new survey suggests that some of the population may need to clean up their act when it comes to routine cleanliness.

The study carried out by Ifop pollsters for Diogene France, a company specialised in cleaning insalubrious housing, showed that as many as 24 percent of French men only have a "thorough" wash twice a week and five percent only once a week.

Among French [women](#), the ratios were 15 percent and four percent respectively.

Health officials view frequent hand washing as a basic precautionary measure to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which has killed some 2,760 people around the world and infected more than 80,000 since it was first detected in China in December and has now spread to dozens of other countries.

But the Ifpop study showed that 29 percent of French people do not routinely wash their hands after going to the toilet and only 25 percent do so after blowing their nose.

The study also exposed French men to be far more lax than women when it comes to changing their underwear.

Only 73 percent change their underpants every day, compared with 94 percent of women.

Twenty-one percent of French men toss their underwear in the laundry basket just twice a week and one percent avoid the problem entirely by going commando (underwear-free).

Nevertheless, when it comes to hair care, French men are meticulous, the study suggested.

Ninety-seven percent wash their locks at least once a week, compared to 96 percent of women.

The survey of 2,005 people was carried out online between January 31 and February 3.

Commenting on the results, the head of Ifop's gender and sexual health division, Francois Kraus, said the results showed that while things had "improved enormously" since the post-war period, sizeable "pockets of dirtiness" remain among men and the elderly.

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