

Germs lurk in office kitchens, break rooms

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Sink and microwave handles are the most contaminated spots, study finds.

(HealthDay) -- Office kitchens and break rooms are germ "hotspots," and sink and microwave handles in these areas are the dirtiest surfaces touched by office workers on a daily basis, according to a new study.

Researchers collected nearly 5,000 individual swabs over six months from [office buildings](#) with more than 3,000 employees. The offices included law firms, call centers and manufacturing, health care and insurance companies.

High levels of germ contamination were found on 75 percent of break-room faucet handles, 48 percent of microwave handles, 27 percent of keyboards, 26 percent of refrigerator handles, 23 percent of water fountain buttons and 21 percent of [vending machine](#) buttons.

The Kimberly-Clark study was conducted in consultation with Charles

Gerba, a professor of microbiology at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Kimberly-Clark makes [cleaning products](#).

"A lot of people are aware of the risk of germs in the restroom, but areas like break rooms have not received the same degree of attention," Gerba said in a Kimberly-Clark news release. "This study demonstrates that contamination can be spread throughout the workplace when [office workers](#) heat up lunch, make coffee or simply type on their keyboards."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains how to [stop the spread of germs at home, school and work](#).

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