



253 delicious & slimming picks

# First

20TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

THIS MINUTE  
STAY

## STUDY: Cold germs lurking in unexpected places

Forget grocery-cart handles and ATMs—new science reveals that the most infectious hot spots may be in private homes

Most women are already leery of public germ zones like ATM buttons, shopping-cart registers. But new research reveals that in many cases, sickness-spreading microbes originate *within* the home. “The germs that cause colds, influenza and gastrointestinal upset can reside on the hands of sick people, so any household item they touch can become contaminated. And when another person handles that object, she’s at risk for infection” explains Philip M. Tierno, Jr., Ph.D., director of clinical microbiology and immunology at the NYU Langone Medical Center in New York City. Fortunately, it’s easy to outsmart these perils—even in someone else’s home.

### Surprisingly risky: PASSING THE SALT

Researchers at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville recently conducted a study of household objects and found that 100 percent of salt and pepper shakers were tainted with cold-causing rhinovirus. “Shakers are passed around the table several times a day but rarely receive the washing that dishes and utensils do,” explains Tierno. And food residue on shaker surfaces can keep those microbes alive for several days.

**Smart self-defense:** At home, Tierno advises wiping down salt and pepper shakers after meals with a mixture of 1 oz. of bleach and 1 quart of water. “This is extremely effective at removing bacteria and viruses,” he notes. And when you’re a dinner guest, take care of your eyes, nose or mouth with a tissue. —Tierno.

### Surprisingly risky: CHANNEL SURFING

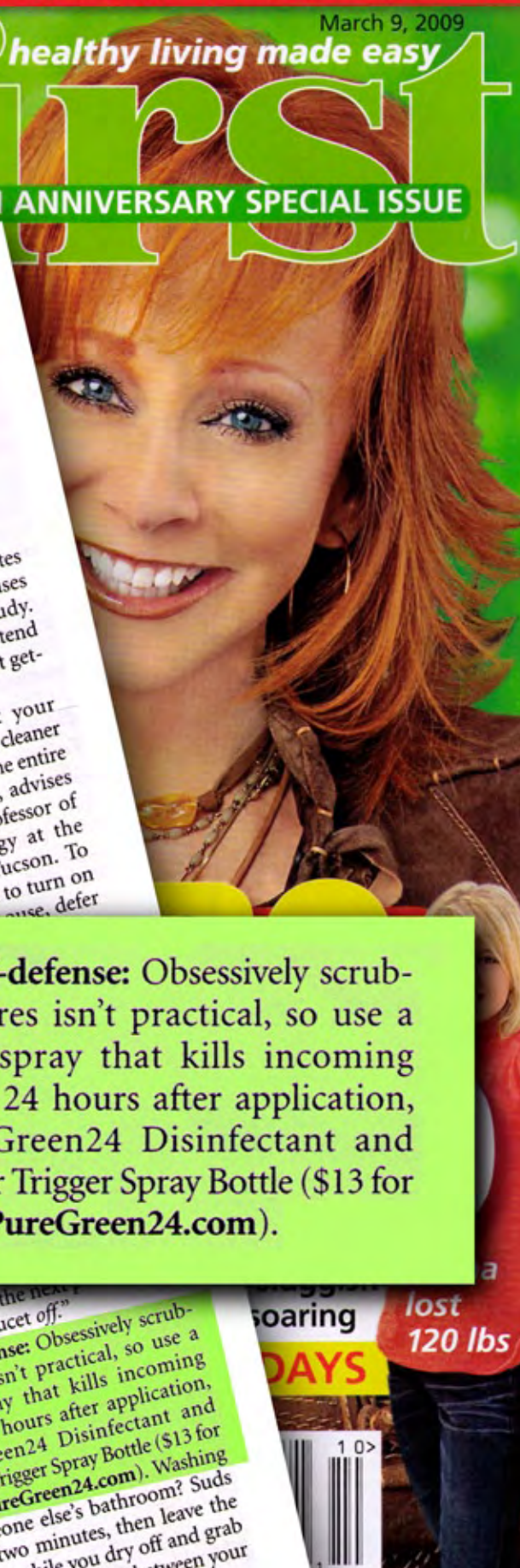
A whopping 60 percent of TV remotes tested positive for bacteria and viruses in the University of Virginia study. That may be because TV viewers tend to snack and stifle sneezes without getting up to wash their hands.

**Smart self-defense:** Disinfect your remote by spritzing a household cleaner on a paper towel, then wiping the entire surface at least once per day, advises Charles P. Gerba, Ph.D., a professor of environmental microbiology at the University of Arizona in Tucson. To avoid germs when you’re asked to turn on the TV, use a remote control that has a touch screen, or use a remote control that has a touch screen, or use a remote control that has a touch screen.

**Smart self-defense:** Obsessively scrubbing fixtures isn’t practical, so use a nontoxic spray that kills incoming germs for 24 hours after application, like PureGreen24 Disinfectant and Deodorizer Trigger Spray Bottle (\$13 for 32 oz., at [PureGreen24.com](http://PureGreen24.com)).

those germs washed hands of the next person who turns that faucet off.”

**Smart self-defense:** Obsessively scrubbing fixtures isn’t practical, so use a nontoxic spray that kills incoming germs for 24 hours after application, like PureGreen24 Disinfectant and Deodorizer Trigger Spray Bottle (\$13 for 32 oz., at [PureGreen24.com](http://PureGreen24.com)). Washing up in someone else’s bathroom? Suds hands for two minutes, then leave the tap running while you dry off and grab a paper towel to use as a barrier between your hands and the faucet. —Tierno.



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