

I've been **thinking**...



Clean Thinking
September 2011

I've been thinking about shopping carts, pacifiers, handheld computers, and grandkids.

Seems my grandkids are hearing the same sound bites from their parents that my kids heard from theirs. Yesterday my always neat-and-tidy daughter Alison interrupted her one-year-old Georgie's exploration of food bits on the floor with a "Gross. Don't touch!"

Generally, I issued such warnings to protect my kids. However, back in the day when my other daughter, saw a half-eaten cotton candy under our seats at Safeco Field and went for it, my, "Don't touch!" was issued to protect my shirt. They say cleanliness is next to godliness. With Sandra, it was next to impossible. Though she outgrew it, she has a little peach that didn't fall too far from her tree.

So tell me, are we supposed to saniwipe the handles on our shopping carts so we won't get other peoples' crud or wipe our hands so other shoppers won't get ours? Yes.

Preventing people in hospitals from spreading and collecting pathogens and reducing hospital-acquired infections require both: faithful surface disinfection and proper hand hygiene.

I've been wondering about hands and handheld computing devices involved with administering medications. From my many hospital visits, it seems that caregivers conscientiously disinfect their hands between patients. I'm not so sure, however, about handhelds, scanners, and carts employed in retrieving electronic medication administration records and scanning bar codes at the point of care.

In the original academy award-winning movie *True Grit*, 14-year Mattie finds herself alone with Tom Chaney, her father's murderer.

Tom Chaney: What are you doin'?

Mattie Ross: I'm getting some water so I can wash my hands.

Tom Chaney: A little smut won't hurt you.

Mattie Ross: That's true—or else you and your chums would surely be dead.

I remember complying with the manufacturer's instructions for our first baby's mouth held comforting device. We submerged the binkie under boiling water for five minutes. Then, upon first use, he spit it out. I quickly fetched it from the dirty floor, wiped it on my sleeve, and stuck it back in his mouth. A little dirt won't hurt you.

But the five-second rule doesn't satisfy The Joint Commission. A little staph on a medical device, and a patient could surely be dead.

In a recent [press release](#) from McKesson, Clorox Professional Products general manager, Craig Stevenson, said, "In working closely with hospitals, we've found that *explicit protocols* for disinfection are very important to ensuring compliance and reducing the risk of infection" (italics are mine). Like godliness, cleanliness is no accident.

Does your hospital have "explicit" protocols related to surface disinfection of medication-administration devices? If so, would you be willing to send me a PDF that I could share with my readers so they can benefit from your good work?

What do you think?



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Speaking of True Grit, I'm happy to announce that next year's [unSUMMIT](#) for Bedside Barcoding attendees will be flying in to Orange County's John Wayne Airport—May 2-4. If you are not on our emailing list, send me your address so we can be sure our nitty-gritty lands in your hands.

BTW Yesterday, the nurse searching electronic records for my periodic melanoma screenings said "There it is—Neueuschwander. Can't be another one of those." Wrong. Not only are there other Neuenschwanders, there are other Mark Neuenschwanders. Thank you Joint Commission for requiring two identifiers.

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