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## **Shopping carts covered in bacteria**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

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5th March, 2011

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

A new study into the hygiene of supermarkets has found that shopping carts are dirtier than the store's bathrooms. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona conducted research on the handles of 85 carts in four American states. He reportedly found bacteria from human waste on the handles of 72 per cent of them. "That's more than you find in a supermarket's toilet," Dr Gerba said. He explained: "That's because stores use disinfecting cleaners in the restrooms. Nobody seems to routinely clean and disinfect shopping carts." Further, half of the carts in Dr Gerba's study tested positive for E. coli bacteria, a nasty germ that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and serious infection.

Professor Gerba is known as "Dr Germ" because of the number of studies he has done on bacteria and everyday objects. His previous studies warned of bacteria on reusable shopping bags, airplane seat-back trays, ground-floor elevator buttons, water fountain toggles, computer keyboards, iPads and playground equipment. He said just about anything touched by children has a high chance of contamination. He advised people to wash reusable shopping bags after use, otherwise they'll become full of "bacterial swamps". He added: "It's like wearing the same underwear every day." Gerba said the best way to avoid getting sick from shopping trolleys is to wipe the handle with a disinfectant cloth and wash your hands often.

# WARM-UPS

**1. BACTERIA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about bacteria. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*hygiene / supermarkets / bathrooms / microbiologist / disinfect / germs / infections / studies / everyday objects / shopping bags / keyboards / contamination / getting sick*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. HYGIENE:** What are the risks with these things? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	Risks?	How to reduce the risks
Shopping carts		
Computers		
Cars		
Mobile phones		
Fast food restaurants		
Water		

**4. GERMS:** Students A **strongly** believe germs will disappear in the future; Students B **strongly** believe that's impossible. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. SUPERMARKET DANGERS:** Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most dangerous at the top. Change partners and share again.

- shopping carts/trolleys
- other shoppers
- wet floors
- high shelves
- the car park
- automatic doors
- fridges / freezers
- the checkout counter

**6. SICK:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'sick'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A study found shopping carts to be almost as dirty as toilets.       | T / F |
| b. A researcher did a study on 85 shopping carts in four U.S. states.   | T / F |
| c. The researcher found bacteria from human waste on shopping carts.    | T / F |
| d. Supermarket toilets are cleaned more often than shopping carts.      | T / F |
| e. The researcher's nickname is "Dr Bacteria".                          | T / F |
| f. The researcher suggested children's hands contaminate most things.   | T / F |
| g. The article says shopping bags end up in swampland.                  | T / F |
| h. The doctor recommended not using shopping trolleys to avoid illness. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. hygiene   | a. if not         |
| 2. bathrooms | b. unpleasant     |
| 3. routinely | c. earlier        |
| 4. nasty     | d. things         |
| 5. serious   | e. toilets        |
| 6. objects   | f. rub            |
| 7. previous  | g. cleanliness    |
| 8. otherwise | h. keep away from |
| 9. avoid     | i. regularly      |
| 10. wipe     | j. bad            |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. A new study into the              | a. and serious infection   |
| 2. He reportedly found bacteria from | b. elevator buttons        |
| 3. tested positive                   | c. human waste             |
| 4. a nasty                           | d. objects                 |
| 5. cause diarrhoea, vomiting         | e. sick                    |
| 6. everyday                          | f. hygiene of supermarkets |
| 7. ground-floor                      | g. of contamination        |
| 8. a high chance                     | h. a disinfectant cloth    |
| 9. avoid getting                     | i. germ                    |
| 10. wipe the handle with             | j. for E. coli bacteria    |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A new study into the (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of supermarkets has found that shopping carts are dirtier than the store's bathrooms. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona (2) \_\_\_\_\_ research on the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of 85 carts in four American states. He (4) \_\_\_\_\_ found bacteria from human (5) \_\_\_\_\_ on the handles of 72 per cent of them. "That's more than you find in a supermarket's toilet," Dr Gerba said. He explained: "That's because stores use disinfecting cleaners in the restrooms. Nobody seems to (6) \_\_\_\_\_ clean and disinfect shopping carts." Further, half of the carts in Dr Gerba's study tested (7) \_\_\_\_\_ for E. coli bacteria, a nasty germ that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ infection.

*reportedly*  
*positive*  
*conducted*  
*serious*  
*waste*  
*hygiene*  
*handles*  
*routinely*

Professor Gerba is known as "Dr Germ" because of the (9) \_\_\_\_\_ of studies he has done on bacteria and everyday (10) \_\_\_\_\_. His previous studies warned of bacteria on (11) \_\_\_\_\_ shopping bags, airplane (12) seat-\_\_\_\_\_ trays, ground-floor elevator buttons, water fountain toggles, computer keyboards, iPads and playground equipment. He said just about anything touched by children has a high (13) \_\_\_\_\_ of contamination. He advised people to wash reusable shopping bags after use, otherwise they'll become full of "(14) \_\_\_\_\_ swamps". He added: "It's like wearing the same underwear every day." Gerba said the best way to (15) \_\_\_\_\_ getting sick from shopping trolleys is to (16) \_\_\_\_\_ the handle with a disinfectant cloth and wash your hands often.

*chance*  
*number*  
*avoid*  
*objects*  
*back*  
*wipe*  
*bacterial*  
*reusable*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

A new study \_\_\_\_\_ supermarkets has found that shopping carts are dirtier than the store's bathrooms. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona \_\_\_\_\_ the handles of 85 carts in four American states. He reportedly found bacteria \_\_\_\_\_ the handles of 72 per cent of them. "That's more than you find in a supermarket's toilet," Dr Gerba said. He explained: "That's because stores use disinfecting cleaners in the restrooms. Nobody seems to \_\_\_\_\_ disinfect shopping carts." Further, half of the carts in Dr Gerba's study tested positive for E. coli bacteria, \_\_\_\_\_ can cause diarrhoea, vomiting \_\_\_\_\_.

Professor Gerba is known as "Dr Germ" because of the number of studies he has done on bacteria \_\_\_\_\_. His previous studies warned of bacteria on reusable shopping bags, airplane \_\_\_\_\_, ground-floor elevator buttons, water fountain toggles, computer keyboards, iPads and playground equipment. He said \_\_\_\_\_ touched by children has a high chance of contamination. He advised people \_\_\_\_\_ shopping bags after use, otherwise they'll become full of "bacterial swamps". He added: "It's like wearing the same underwear every day." Gerba said the best \_\_\_\_\_ sick from shopping trolleys is to wipe the handle with \_\_\_\_\_ and wash your hands often.

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# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'shopping' and 'cart'.

<b>shopping</b>	<b>cart</b>
-----------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• dirtier</li><li>• states</li><li>• waste</li><li>• cleaners</li><li>• half</li><li>• serious</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• objects</li><li>• trays</li><li>• children</li><li>• use</li><li>• underwear</li><li>• often</li></ul>
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# STUDENT SHOPPING CARTS SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

Write five GOOD questions about shopping carts in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# SHOPPING CARTS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'bacteria'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Will you think twice about using supermarket carts/trolleys from now?
- e) Should supermarkets take more care with hygiene?
- f) What are the good and bad things about shopping carts?
- g) How can shopping carts be improved?
- h) Should a shopper be able to sue a supermarket if they become ill after using a shopping cart?
- i) Do other shoppers using shopping carts annoy you?
- j) How can supermarkets stop people stealing shopping carts?

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# SHOPPING CARTS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the things you touch every day are so infected with bacteria?
- c) How clean is your computer keyboard?
- d) What do you think of online shopping carts?
- e) How can we make sure children are more hygienic?
- f) Should we wear gloves when we touch everyday objects?
- g) What other areas of supermarkets contain dangers to your health?
- h) What do you think of the comparison between reusable shopping bags and wearing the same underwear every day?
- i) What three adjectives describe this story, and why?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr Charles Gerba?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping\\_carts.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1103/110305-shopping_carts.html)

A new study (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the hygiene of supermarkets has found that shopping carts are dirtier than the store's bathrooms. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona conducted research on the handles of 85 carts in four American states. He (2) \_\_\_\_\_ found bacteria from human (3) \_\_\_\_\_ on the handles of 72 per cent of them. "That's more than you find in a supermarket's toilet," Dr Gerba said. He explained: "That's because stores use disinfecting cleaners in the restrooms. Nobody seems to (4) \_\_\_\_\_ clean and disinfect shopping carts." Further, half of the carts in Dr Gerba's study tested positive (5) \_\_\_\_\_ E. coli bacteria, a nasty germ that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and serious (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

Professor Gerba is known as "Dr Germ" because of the number of studies he has done (7) \_\_\_\_\_ bacteria and everyday objects. His previous studies warned of bacteria on reusable shopping bags, airplane seat-(8) \_\_\_\_\_ trays, ground-floor elevator buttons, water fountain toggles, computer keyboards, iPads and playground equipment. He said (9) \_\_\_\_\_ about anything touched by children has a high chance of contamination. He advised people to wash reusable shopping bags after use, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ they'll become full of "bacterial swamps". He added: "It's like wearing the same underwear every day." Gerba said the best way to avoid (11) \_\_\_\_\_ sick from shopping trolleys is to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ the handle with a disinfectant cloth and wash your hands often.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                |               |                |               |
|-----|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) onto       | (b) to        | (c) unto       | (d) into      |
| 2.  | (a) reports    | (b) reporting | (c) reportedly | (d) report    |
| 3.  | (a) paste      | (b) waste     | (c) caste      | (d) haste     |
| 4.  | (a) routinely  | (b) routine   | (c) routing    | (d) routines  |
| 5.  | (a) on         | (b) at        | (c) for        | (d) to        |
| 6.  | (a) infects    | (b) infected  | (c) infecting  | (d) infection |
| 7.  | (a) to         | (b) on        | (c) by         | (d) for       |
| 8.  | (a) back       | (b) side      | (c) front      | (d) bottom    |
| 9.  | (a) such       | (b) just      | (c) most       | (d) always    |
| 10. | (a) the others | (b) other     | (c) otherwise  | (d) another   |
| 11. | (a) getting    | (b) get       | (c) gets       | (d) got       |
| 12. | (a) whip       | (b) wimp      | (c) warp       | (d) wipe      |



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about shopping carts and bacteria. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. SHOPPING CARTS:** Make a poster about shopping carts. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. ILL:** Write a magazine article about someone who got ill after using a shopping cart. Include imaginary interviews with that person and the store manager.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a microbiologist. Ask him/her three questions about bacteria. Give him/her three ideas on how to keep us safe from harmful germs. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. hygiene   | a. cleanliness    |
| 2. bathrooms | b. toilets        |
| 3. routinely | c. regularly      |
| 4. nasty     | d. unpleasant     |
| 5. serious   | e. bad            |
| 6. objects   | f. things         |
| 7. previous  | g. earlier        |
| 8. otherwise | h. if not         |
| 9. avoid     | i. keep away from |
| 10. wipe     | j. rub            |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. A new study into the              | a. hygiene of supermarkets |
| 2. He reportedly found bacteria from | b. human waste             |
| 3. tested positive                   | c. for E. coli bacteria    |
| 4. a nasty                           | d. germ                    |
| 5. cause diarrhoea, vomiting         | e. and serious infection   |
| 6. everyday                          | f. objects                 |
| 7. ground-floor                      | g. elevator buttons        |
| 8. a high chance                     | h. of contamination        |
| 9. avoid getting                     | i. sick                    |
| 10. wipe the handle with             | j. a disinfectant cloth    |

## GAP FILL:

### Shopping carts covered in bacteria

A new study into the (1) **hygiene** of supermarkets has found that shopping carts are dirtier than the store's bathrooms. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba of the University of Arizona (2) **conducted** research on the (3) **handles** of 85 carts in four American states. He (4) **reportedly** found bacteria from human (5) **waste** on the handles of 72 per cent of them. "That's more than you find in a supermarket's toilet," Dr Gerba said. He explained: "That's because stores use disinfecting cleaners in the restrooms. Nobody seems to (6) **routinely** clean and disinfect shopping carts." Further, half of the carts in Dr Gerba's study tested (7) **positive** for E. coli bacteria, a nasty germ that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and (8) **serious** infection.

Professor Gerba is known as "Dr Germ" because of the (9) **number** of studies he has done on bacteria and everyday (10) **objects**. His previous studies warned of bacteria on (11) **reusable** shopping bags, airplane (12) seat-**back** trays, ground-floor elevator buttons, water fountain toggles, computer keyboards, iPads and playground equipment. He said just about anything touched by children has a high (13) **chance** of contamination. He advised people to wash reusable shopping bags after use, otherwise they'll become full of "(14) **bacterial** swamps". He added: "It's like wearing the same underwear every day." Gerba said the best way to (15) **avoid** getting sick from shopping trolleys is to (16) **wipe** the handle with a disinfectant cloth and wash your hands often.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - c    3 - b    4 - a    5 - c    6 - d    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - c    11 - a    12 - d