



Hygiene and Cleanliness in the U.S.

Women more likely than men to be concerned about personal hygiene, especially as it relates to self-image

Washington, DC, September 4, 2018 - On a daily basis, most Americans may not put too much thought into their usual bathing and grooming routines. However, a new Ipsos poll seeks to answer the question, “Just how clean are we?” A vast majority of Americans (99%) report that they are clean, and 92% say maintaining good hygiene is a top priority. When asked how often someone negatively comments about their cleanliness, most respondents answer “never” (78%).

When it comes to hygiene habits, some gender disparities come to light. Not only are women (81%) more likely than men (72%) to describe themselves as *very* clean rather than just clean, they are also more likely to consider the tested hygiene habits *very* important. While the majority (98%) of men and women agree that washing their hands after using the toilet is important, women (91%) are more likely than men (84%) to say that this behavior is *very* important. Similarly, women are more likely to say that changing their undergarments every day (88% vs. 78% of men), changing their clothes every day (73% vs. 63%), and washing their hands after using public transportation (74% vs. 66%) are crucial behaviors. These gender differences are also apparent for habits like sanitizing mobile devices, living spaces, and work spaces – hygiene practices which roughly a third of men do not seem to find important (33%, 24%, and 27%, respectively). On the other hand, more than a third of both men and women (36%) do not find that bathing/taking a shower before going to bed is very important.

Women are also more likely to be concerned about hygiene as it relates to image and perception. Three out of five women (61%) “strongly agree” that personal hygiene is directly tied to their self-image, while only a half of men (50%) believe the same. Four out of five women (78%) also believe that personal hygiene can also impact their daily productivity, whereas fewer men (72%) agree. As such, a large majority of women (94%) seem to prioritize hygiene maintenance above all else, and only a third (32%) agree that personal hygiene comes second to school or work priorities.

The average American will shower 6.4 times per week, wash their hair 4.8 times per week, floss 4 times per week, brush their hair 1.8 times per day, and brush their teeth 1.9 times per a day. When asked which personal hygiene products are used daily, toilet paper (96%), toothpaste (95%), toothbrush (94%), deodorant (90%), and soap/body wash (85%) are the top choices. The least used products are shaving products (36%), hand sanitizer (35%), and nail clippers (18%). While the use of most products does not vary widely between women and men, a few products, including shampoo (49% of women vs. 68% of men), shaving products (26% vs. 47%), and nail clippers (16% vs. 21%), are found to be more commonly used by men.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



1. How would you describe your own personal hygiene?

	Total	Male	Female
Very clean	77%	72%	81%
Somewhat clean	22	26	18
Not very clean	1	1	1
Not clean at all	*	1	-
Don't know	*	*	1

2. On average, how often do you shower/bathe per week?

	Total	Male	Female
0-4	24%	20%	28%
5-7	60	58	62
8-10	10	13	6
More than 10	5	7	4
Mean	6.4	6.7	6.2

3. On average, how often do you wash your hair per week?

	Total	Male	Female
0-4	49%	37%	61%
5-7	45	53	38
8-10	3	7	1
More than 10	1	2	1
Mean	4.8	5.5	4.2

4. On average, how often do you brush your hair per day?

	Total	Male	Female
0	14%	24%	6%
1	31	29	32
2	31	25	36
3	12	10	14
More than 4	12	10	13
Mean	1.8	1.6	2



5. On average, how often do you brush your teeth per day?

	Total	Male	Female
0	1%	1%	1%
1	25	29	22
2	59	52	65
3	10	12	9
More than 4	4	5	3
Mean	1.9	2	1.9

6. On average, how often do you floss per week?

	Total	Male	Female
0-4	57%	63%	53%
5-7	35	31	39
8-10	1	2	1
More than 10	4	3	4
Mean	4	3.6	4.4

7. How often, if ever, does someone negatively comment about your cleanliness or hygiene habits?

	Total	Male	Female
Never	78%	70%	86%
Not often	12	16	8
Often	2	3	1
Very often	4	7	1
Don't know	3	3	4

8. Which, if any, of the following personal hygiene products do you use daily? Please choose as many as apply.

	Total	Male	Female
Toilet paper	96%	93	98
Toothpaste	95%	93	96
Toothbrush	94%	92	97
Deodorant	90%	88	93
Soap or body wash	85%	84	87
Shampoo	58%	68	49
Mouthwash	51%	53	48
Floss	47%	41	53
Shaving products	36%	47	26
Hand sanitizer	35%	33	37
Nail clippers	18%	21	16
Don't know	*	-	*

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9. Rate the importance of the following hygiene habits:

Total important

	Total	Male	Female
Washing your hands after using the toilet	98%	97	99
Changing your undergarments every day	96%	93	99
Bathing/taking a shower after an active workout	96%	96	96
Washing your hands before a meal	94%	93	95
Changing your clothes every day	92%	89	95
Washing your hands after using public transportation	90%	89	92
Washing your hands when returning home	84%	84	83
Sanitizing your living space (doorknobs, kitchen counters, bed sheets, etc.)	78%	74	82
Sanitizing your work space (desktop, keyboard, desk phone, headset, etc.)	75%	71	79
Sanitizing your mobile device	69%	64	73
Bathing/taking a shower before going to bed	64%	65	63

a. Changing your undergarments every day

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	83%	78%	88%
Somewhat important	13	15	11
Not very important	3	5	1
Not important at all	1	1	*
Don't know	1	1	*
<i>Important (net)</i>	96	93	99
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	4	6	1

b. Changing your clothes every day

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	68%	63%	73%
Somewhat important	24	26	21
Not very important	7	10	4
Not important at all	1	2	1
Don't know	*	*	*
<i>Important (net)</i>	92	89	95
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	8	11	5

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c. Washing your hands after using the toilet

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	87%	84%	91%
Somewhat important	10	13	8
Not very important	1	1	1
Not important at all	1	1	-
Don't know	*	1	*
<i>Important (net)</i>	98	97	99
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	2	3	1

d. Washing your hands after using public transportation

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	70%	66%	74%
Somewhat important	20	23	17
Not very important	6	8	5
Not important at all	1	2	1
Don't know	2	2	2
<i>Important (net)</i>	90	89	92
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	7	9	6

e. Washing your hands before a meal

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	70%	68%	72%
Somewhat important	24	25	23
Not very important	4	5	4
Not important at all	1	2	1
Don't know	1	1	*
<i>Important (net)</i>	94	93	95
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	6	6	5

f. Washing your hands when returning home

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	53%	53%	53%
Somewhat important	31	31	30
Not very important	12	11	13
Not important at all	3	4	2
Don't know	1	1	1
<i>Important (net)</i>	84	84	83
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	15	15	15

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g. Bathing/taking a shower after an active workout

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	80%	80%	80%
Somewhat important	16	16	16
Not very important	1	1	1
Not important at all	1	1	1
Don't know	1	1	2
<i>Important (net)</i>	96	96	96
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	3	3	3

h. Bathing/taking a shower before going to bed

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	33%	36%	31%
Somewhat important	30	29	32
Not very important	25	23	26
Not important at all	10	11	10
Don't know	1	2	1
<i>Important (net)</i>	64	65	63
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	35	34	36

i. Sanitizing your mobile device

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	29%	27%	30%
Somewhat important	40	37	43
Not very important	21	23	19
Not important at all	7	10	4
Don't know	3	3	4
<i>Important (net)</i>	69	64	73
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	28	33	23



j. Sanitizing your work space (desktop, keyboard, desk phone, headset, etc.)

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	34%	31%	36%
Somewhat important	41	40	42
Not very important	18	20	15
Not important at all	5	6	3
Don't know	3	2	3
<i>Important (net)</i>	75	71	79
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	22	27	19

k. Sanitizing your living space (doorknobs, kitchen counters, bed sheets, etc.)

	Total	Male	Female
Very important	35%	31%	38%
Somewhat important	43	43	44
Not very important	16	18	13
Not important at all	5	6	4
Don't know	1	2	1
<i>Important (net)</i>	78	74	82
<i>Unimportant (net)</i>	20	24	17

10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Total agree

	Total	Male	Female
Personal hygiene is directly tied to self-image	89%	87	90
Personal hygiene is directly tied to how others perceive me	83%	81	86
Personal hygiene can impact my daily productivity	75%	72	78
Personal hygiene can impact how I interact with others throughout the day	88%	86	89
Personal hygiene determines how often I get sick	71%	69	73
Personal hygiene determines how often people around me get sick	60%	59	60
Maintaining personal hygiene is always a priority	92%	91	94
Maintaining personal hygiene comes second to school or work priorities	37%	41	32

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a. Personal hygiene is directly tied to self-image

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	56%	50%	61%
Somewhat agree	33	36	29
Neither agree nor disagree	8	10	7
Somewhat disagree	2	3	2
Strongly disagree	1	*	1
Don't know	*	1	*
<i>Agree (net)</i>	89	87	90
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	3	3	2

b. Personal hygiene is directly tied to how others perceive me

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	47%	44%	50%
Somewhat agree	36	37	35
Neither agree nor disagree	11	12	10
Somewhat disagree	3	5	2
Strongly disagree	1	1	1
Don't know	1	1	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	83	81	86
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	4	6	3

c. Personal hygiene can impact my daily productivity

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	39%	38%	40%
Somewhat agree	36	34	38
Neither agree nor disagree	14	17	12
Somewhat disagree	7	7	6
Strongly disagree	3	3	3
Don't know	1	1	2
<i>Agree (net)</i>	75	72	78
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	9	10	9



d. Personal hygiene can impact how I interact with others throughout the day

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	53%	51%	55%
Somewhat agree	35	35	35
Neither agree nor disagree	8	8	7
Somewhat disagree	2	3	2
Strongly disagree	2	2	1
Don't know	1	1	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	88	86	89
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	4	5	3

e. Personal hygiene determines how often I get sick

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	35%	33%	36%
Somewhat agree	36	36	37
Neither agree nor disagree	17	19	16
Somewhat disagree	6	6	7
Strongly disagree	4	3	4
Don't know	1	2	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	71	69	73
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	10	10	11

f. Personal hygiene determines how often people around me get sick

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	28%	30%	26%
Somewhat agree	32	29	34
Neither agree nor disagree	24	24	23
Somewhat disagree	10	11	10
Strongly disagree	4	3	5
Don't know	2	2	2
<i>Agree (net)</i>	60	59	60
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	15	14	15

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g. Maintaining personal hygiene is always a priority

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	62%	54%	70%
Somewhat agree	30	37	24
Neither agree nor disagree	6	8	5
Somewhat disagree	1	1	1
Strongly disagree	*	1	*
Don't know	*	*	*
<i>Agree (net)</i>	92	91	94
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	1	1	1

h. Maintaining personal hygiene comes second to school or work priorities

	Total	Male	Female
Strongly agree	16%	18%	14%
Somewhat agree	21	23	19
Neither agree nor disagree	18	19	18
Somewhat disagree	23	23	23
Strongly disagree	21	16	25
Don't know	1	1	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	37	41	32
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	44	39	48



About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted August 3-6, 2018. For the survey, a sample of roughly 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ($n=1,005$, $DEFF=1.5$, adjusted Confidence Interval= ± 5 percentage points).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Chris Jackson
Vice President, U.S.
Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 202 420-2025
chris.jackson@ipsos.com

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S.
Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 202 420-2014
mallory.newall@ipsos.com

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

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Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



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www.ipsos.com

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