



NEWS RELEASE

## New Study Takes Bite Out of "5-Second Rule"

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WHILE THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS FOLLOW THE 5-SECOND RULE, A STUDY FUNDED BY CLOROX AFFIRMS GERMS DO ATTACH IN 5 SECONDS

OAKLAND, Calif., January 29, 2010 - Once a somewhat justifiable go-to rule for many, the 5-second rule - eating a piece of dropped food or re-using a baby bottle as long as it's within five seconds - has been challenged by scientists at San Diego State University in a study funded by The Clorox Company.

The San Diego State University study team tested a carrot and a sippy cup (or baby bottle) after the items were dropped on countertops, highchair trays, tile floors and carpet. On most surfaces, the researchers believe that a significant amount of germs were transferred to both the carrot and sippy cup in five seconds. The most germs were transferred to the carrot from the counter followed by the tile floor and carpeted floor, while for the sippy cup, it was the highchair tray.

"We wanted to know if there was any truth to the theory that bacteria need time to attach to surfaces of fallen food or commonly dropped items like sippy cups," says Dr. Scott Kelley, Associate Professor of Biology at San Diego State University. "Unfortunately, for those of us who lived by that rule, it looks like a total myth - five seconds is all it takes."

### Survey Says 65 Percent Follow Rule

Not surprisingly, in a survey of 500 moms and dads across the country, 65 percent of parents admitted to following the 5-second rule in their home. Nearly three-quarters of parents admitted to allowing their children to eat food directly off their highchair tray - one of the places, in the San Diego State University study, where germs were shown to attach within 5 seconds.

The 5-second rule had one famous follower who has decided to revise her practices. Samantha Bee, comedian, actor, author, mom - and long-time supporter of the 5-second rule - wants other moms to know the loopholes in this germ-laden law.

"Apparently it doesn't matter if germs carry a stopwatch or not. If they are around, they will hitch a ride on almost anything," says Bee. "While I will never be able to enjoy another one of my kid's cookies off the subway platform again, at home, my new strategy is to get rid of the little buggers - the germs, not my kids."

## What's a Parent to Do?

To start with, remind your family that the 5 second rule isn't true and that they shouldn't be eating food that has touched a potentially dirty surface. It may also be helpful to make sure the surfaces in your home are clean, in case someone decides to resort to old habits when you aren't looking. One way to do that is disinfecting surfaces with a bleach solution. For items with hard surfaces that may harbor germs, such as toys and sippy cups, using a bleach solution as directed will sanitize them.

"Just yesterday I finished my daughter's mac and cheese using a plastic toy as a spoon," continued Bee. "Did you know you can disinfect those too? I learned this tip and others on the Simple & Surprising e-journal ([www.simpleandsurprising.com](http://www.simpleandsurprising.com)), where each month there is some great information for parents."

The Simple & Surprising e-journal is a new online destination from The Clorox Company that is all about real-life moments and offers readers reality-checked simple tips and even prizes that relate to various lifestyle moments each month. Columns are written by different guest bloggers. This month, Samantha Bee debates the 5-second rule on Simple & Surprising and gives some tips to help people keep their houses clean and get on with their lives, since almost half of all survey respondents (42 percent) described their cleaning style as "busy working parents juggling it all."

## More on Attitude Toward 5-Second Rule Survey

While men and women rely on the 5-second rule equally, the survey revealed some interesting differences when it comes to cleaning around the house.

- Think your hubby cleaned that countertop? Think again. Men are more likely than women to tell their spouses they had cleaned something when they really hadn't - 25 percent of men compared to 14 percent of women.

- Dads need to clean up their act (or maybe just their reputation) ... The survey found that 88 percent of parents think that dad is the dirtier parent.
- There is a clear hierarchy about household surfaces when it comes to the 5-second rule. While 72 percent of people would eat food that fell on a table, fewer than a quarter (24 percent) would eat food that fell on a kitchen counter and very few would eat something that fell on the ground: only 3 percent would eat food from a tile floor and only 1 percent from the carpet.
- While it might be easy for you to pass up that chip after it falls on the ground, kids are not always as discerning about their snacks - and parents sometimes look the other way. In fact, a majority of parents (69 percent) let their child eat directly off the high chair or car seat.

### More on 5-Second Rule Study

In the carrot study of two homes, of all the surfaces, the greatest number of germs were transferred to the carrots after they were dropped on the counter, followed by the tile and carpeted floor. The least amount of germs were transferred after the carrots were dropped on the table.

In the sippy cup study of four homes, the most germs attached to the sippy cup when it dropped on the highchair tray. The least amount of germs were found on the sippy cup after it was dropped on the countertop.

Find more at the Simple & Surprising e-journal at [www.simpleandsurprising.com](http://www.simpleandsurprising.com).

### About Samantha Bee

Samantha Bee was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, and understands that, yes, it's very clean there.

Having no appreciable skill set or professional aspirations, she turned to acting and found it compatible with her lazy lifestyle. She began her career by doing numerous commercial campaigns. In 2003 she joined the cast of "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" and now holds the title of Most Senior Correspondent, having systematically eliminated all those before her. In addition to her work on "The Daily Show," Bee can be seen opposite her husband

Jason Jones in the feature film "Cooper's Camera," "Motherhood" starring Uma Thurman and Woody Allen's "Whatever Works." Samantha's first book, "I Know I Am But What Are You," will be released by Simon & Schuster in June 2010, and later this year will be seen in the films "Furry Vengeance" opposite Brendan Fraser and in 20th Century Fox's "Date Night" opposite Steve Carell and Tina Fey.

When Bee is not working she enjoys photographing her children in foolish outfits and correcting spelling errors on menus.

### **5-Second Rule Attitude Survey Methodology**

These results are based on 500 online interviews with Americans, 18 years of age and older, who are parents of one or more children 6 years of age and younger. Ipsos, a leading market research firm, conducted the interviews between October 16 and October 20, 2009. The final data are statistically weighted to reflect the actual age and gender of parents within the U.S population and are balanced by region.

With a sample of 500, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results are within  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire population of parents in the U.S. been surveyed. The margin of error will be larger for sub-groupings of the survey population.

### **5-Second Rule Study Methodology**

The study was conducted by San Diego State University professor, Dr. Scott Kelley. In the carrot study, 3 baby carrots were dropped on various surfaces, including sink, tile floor, carpet, and tabletop, in two homes. One control carrot was not dropped on a surface. In each case, when germs were transferred, germs attached to the clean carrot within five seconds. The study also tested a child's sippy cup. The sippy cup was tested in 4 homes, with 4 spots per home. A wet sippy cup mouthpart was left on each surface including a high chair, tile floor, carpet, countertop and table, for 5 seconds. It was then swabbed. A control sippy cup was wetted, but not dropped on a surface. In each case when germs were transferred, germs attached to the sippy cup within five seconds. The study was funded by The Clorox Company.

### **About The Clorox Company**

The Clorox Company is a leading manufacturer and marketer of consumer products with fiscal year 2009 revenues of \$5.5 billion. Clorox markets some of consumers' most trusted and recognized brand names, including its namesake bleach and cleaning products; Green Works® natural cleaners; Armor All® and STP® auto-care products; Fresh Step® and Scoop Away® cat litter; Kingsford® charcoal; Hidden Valley® and K C Masterpiece® dressings and sauces; Brita® water-filtration systems; Glad® bags, wraps and containers; and Burt's Bees® natural personal care products. With approximately 8,300 employees worldwide, the company manufactures products in more than two dozen countries and markets them in more than 100 countries. Clorox is committed to making a positive difference in the communities where its employees work and live. Founded in 1980, The Clorox Company

Foundation has awarded cash grants totaling more than \$77 million to nonprofit organizations, schools and colleges. In fiscal 2009 alone, the foundation awarded \$3.6 million in cash grants, and Clorox made product donations valued at \$7.8 million. For more information about Clorox, visit [www.TheCloroxCompany.com](http://www.TheCloroxCompany.com)

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