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# Antibacterial Soap Claims Just Don't Wash

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TUESDAY, Aug. 28 (HealthDay News) -- Antibacterial soaps that contain triclosan as the main active ingredient are no better at preventing infections than plain soaps, say University of Michigan researchers who reviewed 27 studies conducted between 1980 and 2006 to reach their conclusion.

The team also concluded that these antibacterial soaps could actually pose a health risk, because they may reduce the effectiveness of some common antibiotics, such as amoxicillin.

That's because -- unlike antibacterial soaps used in hospitals and other clinical settings -- the antibacterial soaps sold to the public don't contain high enough concentrations of triclosan to kill bacteria such as *E. coli*.

"What we are saying is that these *E. coli* could survive in the concentrations that we use in our [consumer-formulated] antibacterial soaps," researcher Allison Aiello, of the U-M School of Public Health, said in a prepared statement.

"What it means for consumers is that we need to be aware of what's in the products. The soaps containing triclosan used in the community settings are no more effective than plain soap at preventing infectious illness symptoms, as well as reducing bacteria on the hands," Aiello said.

The study is published in the August issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

Other types of consumer antibacterial products that contain different active ingredients such as alcohol (hand sanitizers) or bleach (household cleaners) were not included in the study.

## More information

The Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics has more about [antibacterial agents](#).

SOURCE: University of Michigan, news release, August 2007

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