

3.h: Clarification regarding the use of hand sanitisers

With regard to installing hand sanitisers at the entrance to the Faculty and their use, we would like to reiterate that in the current situation, **washing hands** has absolute priority over using hand sanitisers. The Faculty is not a clinical setting, and also has properly equipped toilets, which are easily accessible to all. The official position of the medical profession is that, in the case of SARS-CoV-2, sanitisers are defined as an additional option, especially where and when, due to technical barriers, access to soap and water is not possible, and handwashing has priority over hand sanitisers.

Hand sanitisers in dispensers along with additional pictorial and explanatory material are placed at the entrance to the Faculty, so that an individual may disinfect his or her hands upon entering the building and thus in some way make a barrier between the external environment and the one in the Faculty. While at the Faculty, we encourage employees and students to wash their hands often and whenever necessary.

The widespread use of hand sanitisers produces more negative outcomes than positives. The use of a hand sanitiser often gives rise to a false impression of safety, whereby an individual may neglect to wash their hands and the principle of non-contact. Furthermore, the choice of appropriate hand sanitisers, their rotation, as well as the correct disinfection technique are very important to prevent the onset of resistance. The use of hand sanitisers also represents an additional financial burden and impacts the environment.

When using hand sanitisers, the hands must be disinfected in accordance with professional guidelines. Disinfection only works if the hands are well-groomed (nails cut short, no artificial nails, no nail polish, no jewellery) and clean. Hands have to be washed and well-dried before using a hand sanitiser. However, because hand sanitisers do not remove dirt, we only use them on hands that are not visibly dirty. If your hands are dirty, the sanitiser may bind to the dirt and, as a result, is no longer (or less) effective at removing microorganisms. An additional danger may arise if users begin to abandon the other hygiene measures, such as washing their hands first and following the non-contact rule, because of a false sense of safety arising from the use of hand sanitisers.

We think it is right that the University and all its employees, through our conduct, set an example in the case of COVID-19 to all our other citizens and convey true and useful information.

With the help of NIJZ information, we keep abreast of the epidemiological situation in Slovenia and elsewhere, as well as all professional advice; in the event of changed circumstances, the Faculty Of Mechanical Engineering will respond appropriately and keep all its staff informed.

Best regards,
Coordination Team