

Cough etiquette requires new learning curve for adults

Aaaaahhhchooo!! Sneezing and coughing aren't uncommon gestures these days. I've done my share as I caught one of those doozers of a colds when I was trying to function on too little sleep.

"Cover your mouth," has been a common request to a child who let his germs spread through the air when coughing. But it's been interesting to see the change in technique for covering the mouth these days.

After living through four-plus decades of covering my mouth with my hand, I've made the change to coughing into my sleeve. For some reason, I recall the day we were visiting at a university two years ago when the woman making the presentation turned from the group and coughed into her arm.

It wasn't long after that our local school nurse presented a program at Rotary. We viewed a brief video that included some humor but also provided very common sense reasons why to change the way to cover your mouth. The nurse gave us lessons.

Germs fall into a shirt sleeve and die, but when coughed into the hand, they are spread to phones, doorknobs, coins, hand to hand, etc. Just think about it.

I've since read how the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has put forth great efforts through posters and public service announcements to get people to change the way they cough and sneeze.

We have a special lady at church who doesn't shake hands. She gives hugs. You might think she's just extra warm with her greetings and she is, but she was a nurse for years and I'm sure she well understands what germs can do.

I think it's cute to watch toddlers who cough into their arm but that's the only way they've ever known. It seemed odd to hear my friend who's an elementary principal indicate that she recently taught her 51-year-old husband how to cough properly.

For those in older generations who haven't made the change, it's time to take heed to that younger generation. Cough and sneeze into your arm. It's healthier.

Yes, it's called cough etiquette and we all need to be proper, even though we've done it the old way for multiple generations.

Speaking of sneezing, have you ever wondered why our society offers blessings when you sneeze but not when you cough?

Aaaahhhchoo!

Bless you. Or *gesundheit* (the German word used to wish good health, especially to one who has just sneezed). I had to look that one up and it took me awhile. Gazoontite looks better.

My grandson once sneezed and said, "Bless me." He then looked over at me and said, "Don't worry. It's just a little gas." I was the one blessed with laughter. Such thoughts that go through their little minds.

Another sneezing memory goes back close to 25 years when we took our nine-day-old baby to press convention. She was so content and slept through all the crowd noise, even when we were right next to speakers. Someone actually asked me if my baby was deaf, because she wasn't reacting to the noises.

You might guess what kind of worry that put into this first-time mother. Granddad to the rescue! Dad let out one of his ferocious sneezes and Brooke's arms went straight up with eyes wide open, then she calmed back to slumber. She could hear all right.

Yes, some sneezes like my Dad's reminded me of the "Three Little Pigs" story when a huff and puff could practically blow a house down. Then there are the cute

Another Perspective

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little “ahoo” gestures like my youngest daughter’s that have a little high pitch ring to them.

Whatever the case, sneezes and coughs do generally release moisture and germs and using cough etiquette by coughing into your arm rather than your hand gives higher potential that the germs won’t spread. It’s only being considerate to those around you. So if you haven’t already, work on switching your long-time habits. And don’t forget to wash your hands often.

Geshundheit!!