

In the kitchen yesterday, I was considering all of the language that we are exposed to around the house. Containers of food and cleaning fluids can all teach us a lot of a new language. Even some small appliances often have instructions of some kind on them. When I'm at the kitchen sink, which is very often, I use all sorts of liquids for all of the cleaning that I do. My dish soap is anti-bacterial. Then I have a hand sanitizer that you can use without water. Even some of the hand creams that I put on after washing have anti-bacterial properties. One item that is very popular among housewives are the 'wipes'. They come in a large, plastic, cylindrical containers. They are disposable, already wet, and either have bleach or alcohol in them, so they blast germs wherever you wipe. They are so convenient to use in almost any room in the house, especially the particularly germey rooms, like the bathroom and the kitchen. I remember about 10 years ago, there was an E-coli outbreak in one of the fast food chains here in the U.S. Jack in the box, the American food chain almost came to ruin because of the scandal. And when I say scandal, it really is, if a chain of restaurants is unclean or serving unclean food. It took years for the company to come back and start getting customers again. This, and other incidences have caused standards of cleanliness in restaurants to go up, partly because the restaurants can easily be sued if people get ill. We expect the places where we eat to be very clean, even if the food is no good. And so it is at home. When flu season gets here, we take extra precautions: hand washing, avoiding people who are sick, and using antibacterial wipes everywhere. When I volunteer at my children's school, I often think that handwashing should be part of the daily curriculum, because so many children have runny noses and coughs. Classrooms are a breeding ground for germs. At least, at home, I can do my part and go to war against the germs.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: to volunteer, to be exposed to, disposable, precaution.

1. You don't get paid for volunteering, but it's very satisfying.
2. You need to put your face mask on; you mustn't be exposed to this gas.
3. We can throw these cups in the rubbish bin; they are disposable.
4. She always takes the precaution of double checking the meat for freshness.