



Hospital sanitation

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SELF-DISINFECTING DEVICE KEEPS HOSPITAL DOORS GERM-FREE

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

Scientists from a University of Leeds spin-off company have created a specially-engineered textile to prevent deadly hospital-acquired infections.

While hand sanitisers have become commonplace in hospitals to ensure germs are not spread, what if there wasn't a need to wash your hands at every moment at all? Scientists from a spin-off company at the [University of Leeds](#) have created a self-disinfecting material off the back of seven years of research. Testing of the material has shown it can reduce bacteria rates by up to 90 percent.

The material, coined [Surfaceskins](#), was formulated after research found that hospital doors are recognised as a key weak link in hygiene because of the number of times people touch them. Surfaceskins antibacterial door pads work by dispensing a small quantity of alcohol gel onto the pad when it is pushed, to disinfect the surface ready for the next person to use the door. This low-cost device, which incorporates three separate non-woven textiles, is designed to be replaced after seven days or one thousand pushes – whichever comes sooner.

The company has also developed a door handle using the Surfaceskins technology, for doors which open towards you. Surfaceskins are being targeted at other industrial sectors where there is a need for meticulous hand hygiene, such as in catering and hospitality. Surfaceskins is a collaboration between the [Nonwovens Innovation and Research Institute Ltd \(NIRI\)](#) – a spin-off company from the University's [School of Design](#).

Takeaway:

Cleanliness is an integral part to health and wellbeing, and a sector that startups have been quick to approach. Communal touch points can be a cause for concern for many, with [shopping trolley handles](#) being the target of one company looking to improve hand hygiene. How could innovations such as Surfaceskins be implemented in your office?