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## Oasis Restaurant has new rub, sanitizer on every table

Owner: It's 'worth every (germ infested) penny'

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The meticulous among us like to eat with clean hands.

But try doing this in a restaurant. Getting from the bathroom to your table can be a feat of extraordinary dexterity as you try to turn off the water, leave the bathroom and dispose of the paper towel without without contaminating your freshly washed hands.

A Fort Myers restaurant has just made this good hygiene practice easy for its diners.

Sitting next to the salt, pepper and packets of sweeteners, customers at the Oasis Restaurant in downtown Fort Myers will also find a dispenser of antibacterial sanitizing gel.

"Maybe I'm just a cleanliness nut, but I think it's a good idea," said Gerry Ryder, a former nurse who lives in Fort Myers and dines at Oasis. "Especially with everything going on today."

Oasis owner Bonnie Grunberg has said she had wanted to put hand sanitizer on the tables years ago. So three weeks ago, at the height the swine flu pandemic scare, she seized the opportunity.

"I've never been thanked so much," Grunberg said, especially from women customers - although men use the gel too, she said.

Regular handwashing by gel or soap and water can help prevent the spread of disease.

"Those things our moms told us: 'Wash your hands before you eat,' is still good advice," said Jennifer James-Mesloh, regional public information officer for the Lee County Health Department.

"Any time someone eats they should have clean hands. Any time you're going to handle food in the kitchen or restaurant you should have clean hands. How you achieve that is a personal preference. If you use soap and water that's fine or if you use hand sanitizer that's fine, too."

But a simple squirt and cursory rub won't do.

Dr. Judith Hartner, the Lee County Health Department director advises using enough hand sanitizer to completely cover the hands and then rubbing them together for at least 20 seconds.

Mike Donohue, a spokesman for the National Restaurant Association, said he doesn't know of restaurants providing a la carte hand sanitizers, but he's not surprised to hear of it.

"If this is something customers use, let's make it convenient (for) them," Donohue said.

But in a recession, can a small business afford to add amenities?

Grunberg has run the Fort Myers landmark for 20 years. She figured her initial investment for the sanitizer was about \$60. Keeping the refills on the tables will run about \$100 a month.

"But it's worth every penny," Grunberg said. "It's the best money we've ever spent, if for nothing else than peace of mind and convenience."