

## ATM MACHINES

ARE YOU GETTING MORE THAN JUST YOUR CASH?

### Appearance of ATMs

The appearance and hygienic nature of ATM and Chip & Pin machines is extremely important. The more hygienic a machine is, the more inclined the general public will be to use it.

Protech IT Hygiene have developed a range of specialist products able to clean and sanitise the keypad and other surfaces, not only killing germs, but also removing built up dirt and grime that may stop the machine from working properly. Unsightly or offensive graffiti can also be removed from ATM machines with specialist products.

### Surface germs

Germs can survive on many surfaces ranging from those in domestic kitchens<sup>1</sup> and hospitals<sup>2</sup>, to commonly used office equipment such as computer keyboards, telephones and even mobile phones<sup>3,4,5</sup>.

Cash machines are not exempt either, a recent study carried out by Rentokil Initial R&D laboratories found that 70% of ATM machine keypads swabbed were contaminated with bacteria<sup>6</sup>. More worryingly, 40% of machines had high numbers of faecal bacteria,

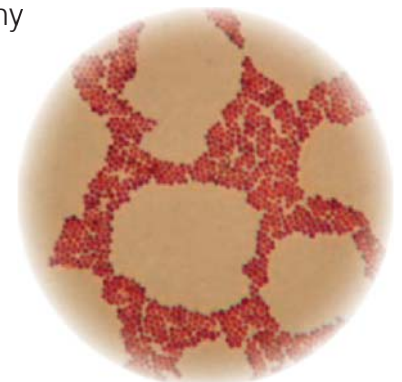
including *Shigella* spp. which can cause severe gastroenteritis. Chip & pin machines were also found to be contaminated with enteric bacteria<sup>6</sup>. So every time you use an ATM or chip & pin machine you can pick up not only your cash, but also the many germs surviving on the keypad and slots.



*Taking a swab from an ATM machine*

### Transferral of bacteria

It has been shown by numerous scientific studies<sup>2,4</sup> that our hands play an extremely important role in the spread of bacteria and viruses, not just in hospitals, but in the everyday environment. These can include hepatitis<sup>7</sup>, viruses that cause colds and flu and even antibiotic resistant bacteria, for example MRSA<sup>8</sup>.



*MRSA bacteria*





Handprint where germs are most commonly found

Individuals with poor hygiene standards will transfer germs to an ATM or chip & pin machine surface by not washing their hands properly after doing everyday tasks such as using a washroom, emptying the bin, touching raw meat or changing nappies, all of which can contaminate the hands. Bacteria and viruses are then able to survive in the tiny grooves and cracks on surfaces for long periods of time<sup>1,9,10</sup> lying in wait until they can be transferred to a more suitable growth environment i.e. you!

Germs may then be transferred into your body when, out of habit, you touch your mouth or nose. So, next time you are using an ATM or chip & pin machine, think twice before then eating your sandwich!

### The Protech Solution

Regular cleaning and sanitising of these machines by Protech will improve their condition, appearance and most importantly protect the general public.

As well as a standard service, Protech also offer emergency call out visits. These are generally required following anti-social behaviour to remove body fluids such as vomit or blood. If these are present on a machine, it is rendered unhygienic and unusable.

Specialist products have been developed for use by our highly trained and knowledgeable staff to specifically target the cause of the problem, be it visible (graffiti/other fouling) or invisible (bacterial/viral) to the naked eye.

### References:

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- <sup>10</sup> The occurrence of influenza A virus on household and day care centre fomites (2005) Boone S.A., Gerba C.P. *Journal of Infection* **51** 103-109

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