

Handshakes: Still Holding Strong

Written by Peter Post



With people so much more aware of germs these days, are handshakes becoming less welcome in corporate America? □ □ □

No. Handshakes are still an expected part of greetings. Imagine leaving the person you're greeting with his hand extended in mid-air as you refuse to shake it. That's a bad first step, and recovering from a mistake is much harder than avoiding it in the first place.

One situation where declining to shake hands would be appropriate is if you had the flu or a bad cold. In this case you could say, "Mr. Smith, I'm very glad to meet you. Please excuse me for not shaking hands, but I have a bad cold and I don't want to give it to you."

If you're worried that someone you're greeting is contagious, don't refuse to shake. Excuse yourself to the restroom as soon as you politely can to wash your hands. You can help avoid catching or spreading colds or flu by washing your hands frequently and being careful not to touch your face.

Source: Post, Peter. "Etiquette at Work." Boston Globe 10 Apr. 2005.

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For more information on [Emily Post Business Etiquette Programs](#) contact Director of Sales and Relationships, Dawn Stanyon at Dawn@emilypost.com.