

Biggest Risk Factors for Disease Spread at Gatherings

1. Hand Hygiene Compliance

- Even though handwashing is emphasized, people may not always wash their hands properly or at all.
- Soap availability, water temperature, and convenience can affect compliance.
- Shared items like drag clothes, cooking utensils, and tools can become fomites (contaminated objects that spread disease).

2. Food and Water Contamination

- **Dish Dance & Dishwashing Setup**
 - The **Dish Dance** system helps reduce contamination, as the tubs are frequently replaced. However, standing water in tubs, even briefly, can still be a potential risk if not changed often enough.
- **Cross-Contamination in Food Prep**
 - Raw vegetables can become contaminated if they come into contact with unwashed hands, dirty cutting boards, or knives used on other foods without proper cleaning.
 - If someone with unclean hands touches a vegetable that is then served raw, bacteria or viruses can transfer to everyone eating it.
- **Food Temperature & Serving Style**
 - Serving food **really hot** (above 60°C/140°F) can kill bacteria, but it's most important to **prevent contamination after cooking** rather than relying on heat alone.
 - Having designated **servers fill plates** instead of people serving themselves at a buffet could reduce the spread of germs, as fewer hands would touch serving utensils and food.
- **Breakfast Barn Ventilation & Storage**
 - The **Breakfast Barn is well-ventilated**, which is good for air circulation.
 - However, the **open cupboards expose dishes and cutlery to flies and dust**, increasing the risk of contamination.
 - The **white plastic jerrycans with tap water** are a potential hazard if they are not cleaned and refilled frequently. Stagnant water inside can become a breeding ground for bacteria if not emptied and sanitized regularly.

3. Shared Toilets and Waste Handling

- **Ecotoilets require proper management**—if people don't use enough sawdust or if poop isn't fully composted before use, pathogens can survive.

- **Pee and poop handling** (e.g., spreading urine on the land) may spread disease if not done hygienically.
- **Flies and insects** can transfer fecal bacteria to food and communal areas.
- **Cleaning frequency**: If toilets aren't cleaned frequently enough (seats, handles, surrounding areas), lingering fecal bacteria can be picked up by people and spread further.
- **Fly infestations** in the past have worsened disease spread, especially around the toilets and the breakfast barn. Measures like **using more sawdust, keeping toilet lids closed, replacing shit tons more often, and covering food with mosquito nets** significantly reduced the problem.

4. Water Sources and Bathing Risks

- The **UV-filtered well water** is safe for drinking, and the **mountain stream water for showers and dishwashing** does not mix with your drinking water supply. However, bathing in untreated water can allow pathogens (like E. coli or Giardia) to persist.
- **Bathtub Heating**: Heating water to **40°C (104°F)** does **not** kill bacteria or parasites—it is actually an ideal temperature for bacterial growth. The bathtub could become a source of **Legionella** or other waterborne infections if it is not drained and cleaned regularly.

5. High-Density Close Contact

- **Shigella and norovirus spread through person-to-person contact**, especially when people eat communally and hug/kiss/touch often.
- The **Love Temple** can be a vector if people don't wash hands before/after, and bodily fluids can spread infections.
- **Drag and costume sharing** might indirectly spread pathogens through contaminated fabric.

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