

Media Release

Hygiene's important role in preventing the spread of flu and food-borne illness just one of a plethora of informative and sometimes quirky topics covered in Accord's new-look Hygiene for Health website

Sydney. Thursday, 24 October 2019. Accord's biennial Cleaning and Hygiene Conference concluded today with the launch of a refreshed and updated Hygiene for Health website (www.hygieneforhealth.org.au).

'Back at the turn of the decade we noted a need for reliable advice about the benefits that good personal and home hygiene can deliver for the health of the community, especially as new viral pandemics like swine flu were gaining attention at the time,' Accord Education Manager Dr Jen Semple said.

'Accord was spurred on by this to create the comprehensive, evidence-based website resource we proudly launched in August 2011 as "Hygiene for Health". While recent years have seen a decline in pandemic risks, the incidence and impacts of seasonal influenza and foodborne illness remains stubbornly high in Australia.

'Since it's 2011 launch, this website has easily become our most popular. And we attribute this, in part, to the effort taken to ensure the site's contents are reliable, impartial, informative, science-backed and free from any commercial angle. Within a catalogue that includes other quality websites promoting safety or more environmentally sustainable product use, such as Furphies (www.furphies.org.au) and WashWise (www.washwise.org.au), Hygiene for Health has consistently stood out as Accord's most visited.

'Over 25,000 visitors each year have searched the site for information ranging from safe food handling to the history of the Spanish flu epidemic to personal grooming tips. And our visitors span the globe, with visits from countries such as the USA, UK, India, Canada and Malaysia joining our local readership from Australia and New Zealand.

'The updated and improved site has been designed with new generations in mind and features eye-catching visuals and more attractive site navigation. The latest format also introduces better viewing compatibility for smart phones. And the site's visuals aim to appeal to a new, younger audience.

'The quirky but fascinating "Hygiene throughout history" section remains in place but has been expanded. Where else could you find information on all aspects of hygiene from ancient times to the present day, all explained in a light-hearted manner? Topics range from laundry practices in Ancient Egypt, the first use of showers in Greece at around 100 BC and the invention of the first flushing toilet in Scotland in 1775. A great resource for students and history buffs, this section makes you appreciate the many hygiene innovations we now take for granted in our part of the world.

'Product safety has always been of paramount importance for our industry. The updated site features a new section on "Hygiene product safety" that highlights how hygiene products are regulated and designed for safety.

'Another new feature of Hygiene for Health is the "Top hygiene tips" section which explains important skills like how to properly brush your teeth, considerate sneeze etiquette while in public and the importance of avoiding cross-contamination when making meals at home. This section also includes an interactive quiz on your own hygiene habits.

'With the new look and more approachable content, Accord is hopeful that Hygiene for Health's full potential as a supplementary school education resource will be unlocked. We encourage teachers, particularly those in primary school science and high school personal development, health and physical education roles, to look at the site and the learning opportunities it could present to their students.

'It is too easy to forget the role better hygiene has played, combined with effective vaccines, in freeing most Australians from the scourge of life-threatening infectious disease and illness. The Hygiene for Health website aims to correct this and be a reminder of the wisdom of the old proverb that "Hygiene is two-thirds of health", Dr Semple said.

Hygiene for Health is at www.hygieneforhealth.org.au