



# spotlight on health

## Healthy Bathrooms, Healthy Families

(NAPSA)—If you think the bathroom is the busiest room in your house, you may be more right than you know. According to the experts at the health Web site WebMD, the average bathroom contains thousands of germs and viruses—ranging from *E. coli* bacteria to the rhinovirus linked to colds and flu.

Of course, that doesn't mean you have to lock your family out of the bathroom, even when it's unoccupied. Just follow a few tips:

### Healthy Smiles

First off, store your toothbrush properly to ensure you keep it—and its user—as germ-free as possible. Be sure to keep it up on a countertop, away from the sink and toilet to prevent airborne contamination from splashing water. Also, don't store toothbrushes together in close quarters (a toothbrush cup in a cabinet, for example). Doing so can increase the odds of germs spreading from brush to brush. Be sure to regularly change your toothbrush, too. For example, there is a toothbrush called Oral-B Pulsar that can make remembering easy. It looks like a normal toothbrush, but it uses a battery to power its pulsating bristles that clean deep between teeth. The battery dies after three or four months of use—roughly the same amount of time dentists say you should keep a toothbrush. When the battery goes, the toothbrush should go, too.

### Raising The Bar

Experts also say there is some



**Brush Up On Health—Changing your toothbrush regularly could help protect you from germs.**

evidence that liquid soap may be more sanitary than bar soap. Bar soap can hold residue from soap dishes and bacteria from the person who used it last. Liquid soaps, such as Ivory Liquid Hand Cleanser, come in self-contained pumps that keep soap fresh and pure. Also, gentle liquid soaps are ideal for teaching kids proper hand washing techniques. Children should know to wash their hands for about 20 seconds (or as long as it takes them to sing their ABC's) at least four times a day, and always after using the bathroom.

### Throw In The Towel

Bathroom towels should be hung up to dry immediately after use and regularly washed in hot water with detergent. Tide liquid detergent, for example, can help prevent germs from building up and towels from smelling musty. You may also want to limit the amount of towel sharing that goes on in your house. Encourage each family member to use his or her own towel.