

UniQ Jewelry Gallery

Expect the Unexpected

From the desk of Diamond Doug

March 2020 Newsletter ~
SPECIAL EDITION

Is hand sanitizer harmful to jewelry and gemstones? Be mindful.

Currently, constant hand-washing and sanitizing isn't just for peace of mind; it's highly recommended. Side note: hand sanitizer is a "stop-gap" measure until you can wash your hands properly - using hand sanitizer once is not enough to kill all germs. But it's keeping us prudently cleaning our hands, and in turn, cleaning our jewelry, too - at least, the pieces we wear on our fingers.

Speaking to a metallurgist friend of mine, to get the dirt (pardon the pun) on keeping hands—and rings—clean, we need to understand there are two varieties of hand sanitizers: alcohol-based and non-alcohol-based. The ones with alcohol are benign to jewelry items as alcohol is the main germ-killing ingredient.

It is worth noting, in this case, that the CDC recommends using alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content. As long as you're doing that, your metal will probably stay in great shape!

What about soaps? Soaps can contain abrasives, like Lava or that orange goo dispensed near hand-washing stations, which could damage the surface of jewelry, gems and cause rhodium to be worn away. What about the gems? Soaps can leave a filmy residue on the stones over time, dulling the sparkle. But it's not permanent, and nothing a good cleaning can't fix.

Sanitized skin should not come into contact with your pearls or soft stones like opals, tanzanite, emeralds, coarse stones or cabochon cut stones until completely dry and evaporated—wait about five minutes before putting those items on, same advice goes for when using perfumes and hairspray, the alcohol in the hand sanitizer can change the surface gem, the two noticeable differences being a loss of luster and a change in color.

Bottom line? Wash your hands. Use sanitizer. Be aware of your surroundings. Be cognitive of your jewelry - BEST to remove rings before applying hand sanitizer. Be mindful.

Swing by UniQ Jewelry Gallery, 3940 W. Centre Ave in the Woodbridge Shopping Center for a **FREE** jewelry inspection and cleaning W-F 11-7 and Sat 10-3 or drop an email to doug@uniqjewelry.com with any questions!

