

Engineer: Technology killing good bacteria
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SAINT LOUIS, MO (2008-04-29) Researchers are warning that too much technology in products and appliances may be harming the environment by killing beneficial bacteria. A recent study has found that consumer products that contain silver nanoparticles may be destroying good bacteria used for wastewater treatment.

Silver nanoparticles are found in socks to kill odor-causing bacteria and energy-efficient washing machines that disinfect clothes without hot water.

Zhiqiang Hu, an environmental engineer at The University of Missouri says silver nanoparticles can get into wastewater treatment and kill good bacteria that remove toxins.

"With our findings, I really do believe that state agencies or the government should impose more stringent regulations on silver nanoparticles," said Hu, who is an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering.

Hu also warns that silver nanoparticles could also be found in wastewater treatment sludge , which is often used as fertilizer to grow food crops.

Hu is now conducting a second study to determine at what levels nanosilver becomes toxic.