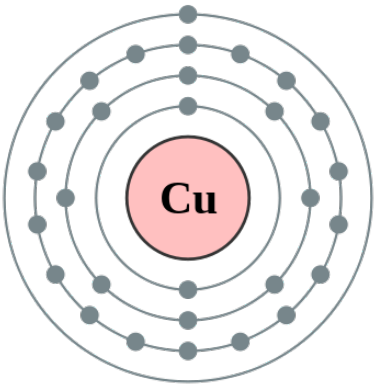
Germs: Cu – never?

29: Copper **2,8,18,1**



Copper (Cu in the periodic table of elements) isn't just for pennies and plumbing anymore. Recent research has confirmed the antimicrobial properties of copper and its effectiveness in various "high-touch" surfaces. Studies have found that when cleaned regularly, copper and its alloys can kill a wide range of microorganisms from E. coli to the flu virus within two hours.

The evidence has been so compelling that the US Environmental Protection Agency has approved the registration of many copper alloys as "antimicrobial materials with public health benefits." This has allowed manufacturers of certain registered copper alloys to legally make health claims touting the germ-killing properties of their doorknobs, handles, etc.

It's no surprise that we'll continue to see more copper in public spaces like hospitals, schools, and sport facilities. The subway agency in Santiago, Chile, for instance, will install copper-zinc alloy handrails in some 30 stations in its latest overhaul of the system. Hospitals all over the world are incorporating copper into their facilities with high-touch items doorknobs, faucets, and bedrails.

There may be smaller, home-scale applications, too. For clients who frequently host functions in the home, bronze handrails in a receiving room or copper surfaces in a large kitchen may make sense. Clients with small children may want to incorporate copper alloy hardware into high-use play areas.

For more information see the International Copper Association's website. If you'd like to discuss thoughtful ways of incorporating copper into your project, contact us at info@irongrain.com.