



Safe Touch

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SafeTouch launches EU-funded project to develop smart, self-decontaminating surfaces for safer hospitals and public spaces

Athens, Greece — The SafeTouch consortium today announced the launch of SafeTouch, a Horizon Europe innovation action focused on developing smart, self-decontaminating microfilms to help prevent the spread of infections on high-touch surfaces in healthcare and public environments.

Coordinated by the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), SafeTouch will design, validate and prepare for market the iSafeTouch (iST) microfilm: an ultra-thin, flexible coating that senses use and triggers rapid thermal activation to decontaminate the surface within milliseconds. The technology aims to offer chemical-free, water-free hygiene and to integrate with an intelligent Smart Hygiene Grid (SHG) for remote monitoring and management.

“SafeTouch brings together microscale thermal engineering, materials science and digital connectivity to rethink how we keep surfaces safe,” said Prof. Nikos Chronis, NTUA and SafeTouch Project Coordinator. “Our goal is an instantly decontaminating, easy-to-deploy film that supports safer patient care and healthier public spaces.”

Why SafeTouch

High-touch surfaces such as door handles, light switches and bed rails are well-known vectors for surface-mediated transmission. Current disinfection methods rely on chemicals and manual routines that are time-consuming, resource-intensive and difficult to sustain in busy settings. SafeTouch proposes a complementary approach: on-demand, automated decontamination built into the surface itself, with the potential for facility-wide oversight via the SHG.

Consortium and timeline

SafeTouch is a 36-month initiative uniting leading European research, clinical and industry partners:

- National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) — Coordinator; iST design and integration
- Fraunhofer Institute for Reliability and Microintegration (Fraunhofer IZM) — Microfabrication
- Asociacion Instituto de Investigacion Sanitaria Biogipuzkoa — Clinical validation in hospital settings
- A4TEC — Antimicrobial efficacy and biosafety assessment
- Hellenic BioCluster (HBIO) — Innovation management and IP
- Life Cycle Opinions Management (LOM) — Sustainability and safe-by-design assessment
- Martel Innovate — Communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement

Across the first year, partners will finalise technology design, advance fabrication and materials durability, conduct laboratory efficacy and safety assessments, and prepare early pilots, including deployment in a hospital medical ward.

About SafeTouch

SafeTouch (Self-disinfecting, smart microfilms for healthcare & community acquired infections) is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101185759. The project develops iSafeTouch (iST) microfilms and an associated Smart Hygiene Grid (SHG) for connected hygiene management. Learn more at <https://safetouch-project.eu/>.