

Your parents tell you, “Always wash your hands before you eat.” “Why?” you ask. “Because you might get germs from the things you have touched,” reply your parents. The real truth is that if you don’t wash the dirt off your hands there might be an explosion when you eat a hamburger.

When the Chinese first invented gunpowder they used a variety of ingredients. Gunpowder is made from sulfur, charcoal and saltpeter. The first ingredient is sulfur. Sulfur is recovered commercially from salt domes along the Gulf Coast of the United States. Who knows, your saltshaker may contain some sulfur.

The next ingredient is charcoal. There is nothing better than a hot, juicy, charcoal broiled hamburger. As the juices from the fat in the burger drips down on the charcoal the flame reaches the meat. Sometimes a bit of that charcoal sticks to the meat. Ummm good!

The final ingredient of gunpowder is saltpeter. Do you know where we get saltpeter? It is produced by a bacterial action as animal and vegetable waste decays. This decaying material is often found in and around houses. In other words, saltpeter could be in the dirt around your house.

So if you do not wash the dirt off your hands before you eat you could get a bang out of your next hamburger! The dirt could mix with the salt and the charcoal on your hamburger resulting in an explosion! Don't forget to wash your hands before you eat!