Solid surface has been around for more than 50 years now and is increasingly becoming the choice for healthcare, restaurant and hospitality applications because of its hygienic properties. Cleanliness and good hygiene are on pretty much everyone’s minds these days, but before getting into why solid surface is an intelligent choice for sanitary applications, just what is it?

Even with more than 50 years of development and refinement under its belt, many typical home or business owners, or even architects and designers, really have little idea of what solid surface is.
Uses for Solid Surface

While countertops are the most common use for solid surface, because of its aforementioned properties, it can be used in many ways. When it comes to horizontal applications, countertops are just the tip of the iceberg. Tables, benches, furniture, commercial food prep areas, desks, window sills, bar tops and even flooring are all potential uses for this material.

It is also suitable for numerous vertical applications. Among these are bathroom partitions, shower/wet walls, interior wall cladding, operating rooms, wainscoting, signs and even exterior cladding.

Another area for use of this material is OEM, custom or unique creations. Custom sinks, bathtubs, shower pans, switch plates, shelving, unique furniture, lighting applications, cabinetry, door pulls and both functional based and aesthetically pleasing art are all possible, as well as many things beyond. The possibilities are pretty much limited only to the imagination and skill set of the craftsman working with the material.

Solid Surface for Safety

With at least a basic understanding of the material, its properties, fabrication techniques and popular uses, it begins to be easily seen why solid surface is highly suitable and growing in usage for healthcare, commercial kitchens and other places that can be potentially risky in terms of exposure to harmful, illness causing agents and must be able to stand up against heavy use.

Hygienic

Solid surface prevents microbial growth and does not support the growth of bacteria, mold or other fungus, which makes it highly suitable for healthcare settings like hospitals, doctors’ offices, hospices and retirement homes. This also makes it desirable for commercial kitchens and bathrooms, which commonly come in contact with germs, and it goes without saying that these qualities are also great for household kitchens and baths.

Seamless

A major appeal of solid surface is its seamless nature, which means it can be joined with no gaps. This makes it perfect for applications like surgical room walls, showers / wet walls, coved backsplashes and integrated sinks. The smooth surface eliminates cracks and crevices, that typically trap dirt and contaminants.

Greenguard™ Certification

Another healthy certification that many solid surface brands have earned, this means that it is low chemical emitting. GREENGUARD Certification means that a product has been tested for hundreds of VOCs which can be considered harmful by UL and does not contribute to poor indoor air quality. This is just another of the factors that make solid surface a safe choice.

NSF/ANSI 51 Certified

Many, if not most, solid surface brands carry a certification that means it has been tested and is safe for food contact. This is another reason why it is considered a suitable product for use in commercial or residential kitchens.

Tying it all together

In summary, its easy to see why solid surface continues to grow in popularity in the healthcare industry and why it is also a great fit for restaurants and commercial kitchens, as well as any other application subject to high traffic or potentially harmful contaminants.

With growing fears regarding cleanliness, it can help to provide peace of mind to clients and with the vast color options and near-endless design possibilities, they don’t have to sacrifice looks for good hygiene.

Looking forward, with an aging Baby Boomer population, healthcare demands are expected to continue to grow, further driving growth of solid surface. As such, manufacturers, distributors, fabricators, architects, designers and all of the various entities involved in the creation and use of the product should make sure the potential of the material is understood. As always, this starts with educating the customer at all levels.

By doing so, the case for solid surface as a clean, durable, renewable and aesthetically pleasing option pretty much sells itself.