

How do you sneeze in a spacesuit? Very carefully

July 21 2009, By MIKE SCHNEIDER , Associated Press Writer



In this 19 July 2009 photo provided by NASA shows Canadian Space Agency astronaut Julie Payette float onto the mid deck of the space shuttle Endeavour, where she joins astronaut Dave Wolf, who makes an entry on a laptop computer. The two STS-127 mission specialists are part of a seven member shuttle crew currently visiting the International Space Station, which is now docked with the shuttle. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- When it comes to sneezing in a spacesuit during a spacewalk in the void of space, it is best to aim well.

That is the advice lead spacewalker David Wolf gave Tuesday to Dawn from Indianapolis, who along with more than a dozen others had questions they had posted on YouTube answered by some of the crew of space shuttle Endeavour.

"I've done it quite a few times, most recently yesterday," said Wolf, who led the mission's second spacewalk Monday and was set to go on a third spacewalk Wednesday. "You learn in training, and I don't know how to say this, aim well. It can mess up your view and there is no way to clear it."

The YouTube questioners, mostly children and teenagers, had posted their questions well before last week's launch of Endeavour on a 16-day mission to the international space station. Their posts were played one at a time for commander Mark Polansky, pilot Doug Hurley, Canadian astronaut Julie Payette and Wolf, who took turns answering the questions live, more than 200 miles above Earth.

Other questioners asked the astronauts what they missed most in space (friends and family), what they did in their spare time (look out the window) and what would happen if the shuttle or space station flew into a black hole (don't know). There are currently 13 crew members at the space station - seven visiting from the shuttle and six living at the station.

The YouTube questions were the latest effort by NASA to embrace social media. Polansky has a Twitter account with more than 37,500 followers, and since the mission began last Wednesday, Polansky has tweeted regularly with the help of workers at the Johnson Space Center who actually post his messages.

Last May, under the moniker Astro-Mike, Astronaut Mike Massimino became the first person to tweet from space during space shuttle Atlantis' repair mission to the Hubble Space Telescope.

While Wolf and astronaut Christopher Cassidy prepared for Wednesday's spacewalk, other crew members used robotic arms Tuesday to move a storage pallet holding equipment for three experiments from the belly of the docked space shuttle Endeavour to the outside of the

orbiting outpost's Japanese-made lab.

Endeavour's seven astronauts had some rare off-duty hours Tuesday afternoon, when they had the opportunity to do nothing but look out the window.

On the Net:

NASA: http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/main/index.html

Mark Polansky's Twitter page: http://twitter.com/Astro_127

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