

Germs + Handwashing

Discussion & Experiment Guide



Learning Objective 1: Visualize how easily germs (viruses and bacteria) spread.

Learning Objective 2: Learn how to reduce the spread of germs with proper handwashing.

Discussion

Did you know?

Some germs can make you sick. Germs are everywhere, even though they are so small that you can't even see them. Because you can't see them, it can be really hard to remember how easy it is to spread germs when you touch things and why it's important to wash your hands often.

So, how often should you wash your hands?

Well, let's think about all the things you touched today. Did you ride a bike? Or throw a ball? Did you touch a table, or open a book, or eat food with your hands, or scratch your nose, or go to the bathroom? When you touch lots of things around you, even when you touch your face, it's important to try to remember you can spread germs that can make you or someone else sick. Here's a fun activity that helps explain how easy it is for germs to spread to surfaces and to other people.

Germ Spread Glitter Experiment

What You Need:

- Small bottle of hand lotion or baby oil
- Glitter
- Something to pick up, like a cup or plate
- A buddy or helper
- Sink with warm running water
- Bar of soap or liquid dishwashing soap

Activity:

1. Ask everyone participating in the experiment to rub lotion or baby oil on their hands.
2. Sprinkle glitter on one hand and then rub them together. These are our germs. *You've been sneezing and coughing and wiping your nose, and now the germs are all over your hands!*
3. Shake hands with everyone else. What happens to the germs?
4. Pick up the cup (or some other item you can pick up). What happens to the germs?
5. Try washing your glittery hands in warm water without soap. Did the germs go away?
6. Wash your hands again. Use soap this time. Wash your hands for 20 seconds. Did the germs go away?

What Did You Learn?

Germs spread in lots of different ways.

Some of them travel in saliva through the air, which is why you should cover your mouth when you sneeze and cough. Even then, you still get the germs on your hands. Many germs love to move from person-to-person by personal contact.

When you shook hands, did you see how germs can spread to others?

When you picked up your cup, did you leave behind any germs on the cup?

If you had washed your hands right after you sprinkled the glitter on them, all those germs wouldn't have been left behind.

When you wash your hands, you should always use soap and warm water. Scrub all over your hands: your nails, the backs of your hands, in between your fingers, and even your wrists.

You should wash for at least 20 seconds.

A good way to judge the time is to sing the alphabet song to yourself.

And remember the rhyme that Jabberblabber and Harmony taught us? Repeat it twice while you wash your hands.

One, Two, Three, Four, Five.

Water, Soap, Scrub, Rinse, Dry.

Wash them low, wash them high

for 20 seconds. Now you try!

And, Repeat!

One, Two, Three, Four, Five.

Water, Soap, Scrub, Rinse, Dry.

Wash them low, wash them high

for 20 seconds. Now you try!



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This material was prepared by Qsource for its Qsource Kids™ Health Education Curriculum Program. Qsource is a non-profit organization working to improve public health and the quality, cost and efficacy of healthcare systems. 20.TNCS.Wk-1.10.004

Inspired by The Children's Museum of Indianapolis Real Science: Glitter Germs

