

CURIOSITY AT HOME

HAND HYGIENE SCIENCE



WHAT ARE GERMS?

Germs are tiny living things that we can't live with and can't live without. Some are essential to our good health and others can make us sick. They are so small that you can't see them without a microscope, but they are so strong that they can make you stay in bed sick for a week. Here's the dirt on the four major types of germs:

Bacteria—Only one cell in size, these microbes can survive out side or inside our bodies. Certain types of bacteria are responsible for strep throat, cavities and ear infections. But not all bacteria are bad! Our bodies rely on certain bacteria to digest our food and to stay healthy.

Viruses—Many viruses make us sick because they kill healthy cells. These viruses invade cells, taking over and multiplying. Most of them need living things to survive. Viruses cause the common cold, flu, chickenpox and measles.

Fungi—We're not talking toadstools here, though they are related. Fungi cannot make their own food so they depend on plants, people and other animals for their nutrition. They thrive in damp, warm spots in or on the body and can cause athlete's foot and ringworm.

Protozoa—These moisture-loving, single-celled microorganisms can spread disease through water. If they get inside your body, it may result in diarrhea.

ARE ALL GERMS BAD?

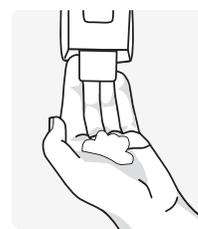
No! In fact, we need bacteria to get nutrients from our food—they help break it down so our body can use it. Other bacteria help keep us from getting sick by making it hard for disease-causing organisms to find a place to set up shop.

WHY SHOULD I WASH MY HANDS? THEY DON'T LOOK DIRTY!

It's probably a good thing we can't see all the microbes covering our bodies—just seeing their sheer numbers might make us sick! But they are the reason why it's so important to wash our hands. We are all busy touching things all day long...and our hands are busy picking up all kinds of bacteria. Good hand-washing is one of the best (and easiest!) ways to keep yourself, your friends, and your family healthy. It's more fun to wash your hands if you sing a song while you do it.



1. water



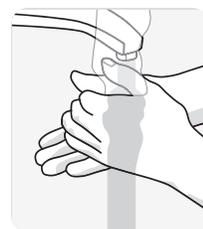
2. soap



3. lather



4. don't forget
between your
fingers



5. rinse



6. dry

Hand Washing Ditty (2x)

(sing to the tune of "Happy Birthday to Me")

Clean warm water and soap

Wash and lather my hands

Scrub my nails and my fingers

Now I'm done, dry and fly!



Show us how you're being curious! Share your results with us.

