

A Germ's Journey

Educational Resources

A Germ's Journey - Parents & Teachers Guide

Independent handwashing for young children is fundamental for their health. Research has shown that good handwashing practices not only reduces cases of stomach bugs but also the transmission of colds and flu. Teaching good health hygiene practices from a young age is a lifelong skill. This should be encouraged, particularly after using the potty or toilet and before eating meals; ensuring these routines are standard practice within the home, childcare and school setting. By using 'A Germ's Journey Educational Resources' including the book, website, and handwashing song you can teach children the importance of washing their hands in a fun and interactive way. For access to the resources please visit www.agermsjourney.com.

Using the 'A Germ's Journey' Educational Resources with your Children:

Teach your child the importance of cleanliness:

Use the book and learning resources on the website to explore a germ's journey from toilet seat to tummy and learn how to prevent illness through careful handwashing hygiene. Teach children the ABC – antecedents, behaviour, and consequences. Antecedents are germs in the environment, behaviour is washing hands, and consequence is keeping well.

Why do we wash our hands?

Germs are easily removed from hands by washing them with soap and water. Encourage children to wash all the germs away after using the toilet or potty, instead of putting their hands in their mouth and making themselves sick. Use the illustrations from the book and the animations in the games online as a visual aid to support your child's understanding of this concept.

Bye Bye Germs:

Although germs cause illness, they are easily removed from hands by washing with soap. Help children wash their hands with water, soap (bubbles, bubbles, bubbles), rinsing, and drying to remove all the germs. Ensure that the towels children use to dry their hands are clean and changed regularly, as towels harbour germs. Handwashing techniques can be taught by using 'A Germ's Journey' handwashing song and also by either using Glo-Germ (UV gel technique) or olive oil and glitter, which need to be washed away from the hands by soap and water. If the children have not washed their hands properly then either UV gel or oil and glitter will remain on their hands, clearly showing children where they have missed in the hand washing process.

Find the Germs Games:

Use both the 'Find the Germs' game at the back of the book and the game on the website to explore with your children the idea of germs hiding.



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Look around the kitchen/cafe scene and see if your child can identify where the germs might be hiding; by the bin, on the table, etc. Explain to your child that touching certain areas of the home, even though they may look clean, may still result in germs getting on to their hands and discuss why we should wash our hands after touching certain surfaces. This game is also a useful tool to emphasise the concept of the invisible germ, in that, although we cannot see germs on hands or surfaces, they are still there and can make us poorly.

More Germs:

Germs are able to multiply at a fantastic rate, with one *E. coli* becoming 64 in two hours and a million after seven hours. Let children know that in the time it takes for them to eat their lunch a few germs will become lots and lots and can make them poorly. Encourage your children to wash their hands before they eat. Use the interactive heat sensitive hands in the book to demonstrate germs multiplying, and the presence of germs on dirty hands.

Good Germs:

It is very important to reassure your child that not all germs are bad for us and that many germs help us to digest our food and build up our immune systems to fight illness. The book and resources on the website aims to help children understand where the bad germs may live and how simple actions like washing their hands after going to the toilet can remove them.

Questions To Ask Your Children:

In order to encourage discussion and see if your child has understood the topic, the following questions can be asked:

1) Do you know how a germ can make you poorly?

If you touch something with germs on and then put your hands in your mouth, the germs will travel to your tummy and make you sick.

2) Do you know how to make germs go away?

Wash your hands with soap and then dry them.

3) Where do germs live?

Look at the kitchen page in the book to see where germs hide, or use the interactive website and have fun uncovering the germs hiding places.

4) Can we see germs?

No, germs are invisible - although we cannot see the germs, they are there and can make us poorly. Use the black heat sensitive pads in the book and games on the website to demonstrate this.

We really hope that you and your child enjoy exploring 'A Germ's Journey', and that you find the resources useful!

