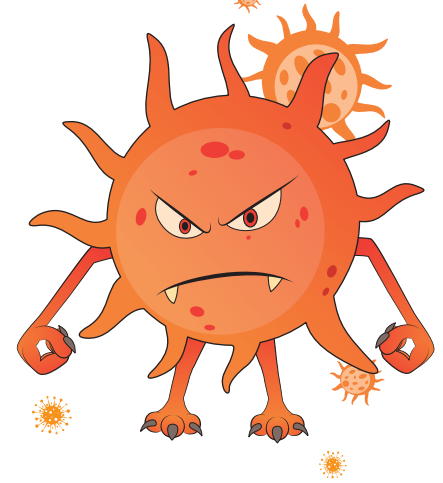


Educator Resource

Interactive Experiment: The Importance of Handwashing

Students come into contact with germs every day. They may not understand just how quickly germs can be transmitted by hands – and as a result, they may not wash and sanitize as often as they should. Try these interactive experiments to reinforce hand hygiene and encourage a lifetime of healthy habits.



Materials

- White paper
- Washable finger paint (darker colors are recommended)
- Blindfold
- Soap
- Running water
- Paper towels

Getting Ready

- **Before performing the experiment**, complete Worksheet 1 to discuss the concept of germs (good vs. bad, microscopic and can't see).
- **If performing the experiment in a classroom** setting, split students into 2 groups. Review Worksheet 2 with student group A to review how to properly wash hands. Do not review Worksheet 2 with student group B.

Procedure

1. Explain that paint will represent germs typically found on our hands.
 - **Note** – We're unable to see germs because they are so small (microscopic).
2. Dispense a dime-sized amount of paint on student's hands.
3. Have student rub paint on palm of hands only – from wrist to fingertips.
4. Blindfold student and ask them to wash hands with soap and water.
 - **Note** – For classroom experiment, group A should be instructed to wash per the WHO Handwashing Procedure. Allow group B to wash as they normally would.
5. Lightly pat palms of hands with paper towel one time.
6. Stamp hands onto white paper. Any area on the paper that has paint represents where germs were missed during hand wash. Areas without paint represent that germs have been removed.

Discussion Questions

1. Which area(s) on your hands did you wash poorly and they had a lot of visible paint? Which area(s) on your hands did you wash well and they had no visible paint?
2. For classroom experiment – did group A or group B wash their hands better and remove more germs?
3. Look around – what objects do you think have the most germs on them? Why?
4. What area of your hand do you think would have the most germs? Why?
5. What is a good way to clean your hands?
6. Why is it important to clean your hands?