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# GERMS MAKE ME SICK!

Author: Melvin Berger  
Illustrator: Marilyn Hafner  
Publisher: HarperCollins

## THEME:

Staying healthy by learning good health habits is an important part of growing up.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

We share our world with millions of microorganisms, and although most of them are harmless, some make people sick. This feature book explains what germs are, how bacteria and viruses affect the human body, and how the body fights against them. Using a microscope, LeVar discovers what germs really look like and talks to lab scientists about germs and habits that can keep us healthy. A visit to an organic farm illustrates how microorganisms are important to the growing of food.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Before viewing the program, ask students, "What is a germ?" Write their ideas on the board and revisit them after watching to see if students want to make any modifications to their original thoughts.

Also before watching, discuss places where germs are likely to be. Ask students ways they might avoid being exposed to these germs.

In the program, students learn that both bacteria and viruses can make us sick. Discuss what we can do to take care of ourselves when we start to feel sick.

Discuss with the class how good health has an impact on all aspects of our lives.

Near the end of the *Germs Make Me Sick!* book is a list of "Rules for Good Health." Discuss with students how they try to follow each of those rules.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

If microscopes are not available, borrow some from a high school science lab so that students can do observations. (It is possible that some prepared slides might be available for viewing.) Examine items such as a human hair, pond water, mold, dirt, etc. Have them describe what they see and make drawings of their observations.

Invite the school nurse into the classroom to demonstrate proper handwashing techniques and talk about the importance of washing hands.

Grow some microorganisms in the classroom. Pieces of bread or ripe fruit will grow mold reasonably quickly under the proper conditions. Experiment with varying heat (sitting in sunlight vs. regular room temperature) and wetness (daily dampening vs. allowing to dry out) conditions to see which factors enable mold to grow more quickly. Have students make daily observations and sketch what they see.

Have students make "Stay Away From Germs" posters and display them in appropriate places around the school building.

Make a bulletin board promoting a healthy lifestyle. Have students decide on the important aspects of healthy living (e.g., diet, exercise, sleep, cleanliness, etc.) and look for articles and pictures in newspapers and magazines that fit these aspects. As they design the bulletin board, have them consider the placement of the materials they collected into categories based on the healthy living factors they identified. Provide materials for making necessary labels, backgrounds, and borders for an attractive display.

Remind students of ways to fight germs by singing this song (to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O"):

I wash my hands before I eat.  
There are no germs on me.  
G-E-R-M-S, G-E-R-M-S, G-E-R-M-S,  
There are no germs on me.  
I stay away from friends with colds.  
There are no germs on me.  
G-E-R-M-(clap), G-E-R-M-(clap), G-E-R-M-(clap),  
There are no germs on me.  
I always clean my cuts and scrapes.  
There are no germs on me.  
G-E-R-(clap)-(clap), G-E-R-(clap)-(clap), G-E-R-(clap)-(clap),  
There are no germs on me.  
I wash my hands on bathroom breaks.  
There are no germs on me.  
G-E-..., G-E-..., G-E-...,  
There are no germs on me.  
I never put things in my mouth.  
There are no germs on me.  
G-..., G-..., G-...,  
There are no germs on me.  
I keep my body healthy so—  
There are no germs on me....., ....., .....,  
There are no germs on me.



With students working in small groups, use manipulatives to demonstrate the mathematical concept of doubling. Pinto beans or dried peas work well. Provide containers of varying sizes, such as nut cups, margarine tubs or other containers that come in 8-ounce and 16-ounce sizes, plastic quarts, half-gallon, and gallon containers. Designate the number of times to double the items. (For example, doubling beans ten times is 512 beans.) Students will need to estimate the size of container they need to hold the items they are doubling. At some point, they may decide to double the containers rather than individual beans. Read *One Grain of Rice* by Demi (Scholastic) or *The King's Chessboard* by David Birch (Dial) to accompany this activity.

**RELATED THEMES:**

nutrition  
physical fitness

**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #65 — Sports Pages  
Program #24 — The Tortoise And The Hare

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Melvin Berger is the author of more than 100 books for children. Many of his books have been named "Outstanding Science Books for Children." He frequently collaborates with his wife, Gilda, on books. The Bergers make their home in East Hampton, New York.

**ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:**

Marylin Hafner studied art in New York at Pratt Institute and the School for Visual Arts. She has written and/or illustrated many books for children, including **Reading Rainbow** review book, *Mother, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers*, by Mary Ann Hoberman. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

THE MICROSCOPE  
by Maxine Kumin, illus. by Arnold Lobel (HarperCollins)  
GUESS WHAT?  
by Beau Gardner (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)  
TEDDY BEARS CURE A COLD  
by Susanna Gretz, illus. by Alison Sage (Four Winds)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

OUCH! A BOOK ABOUT CUTS, SCRATCHES, AND SCRAPES  
by Melvin Berger, illus. by Pat Stewart (Dutton)

I WISH I WAS SICK, TOO!  
by Franz Brandenburg, illus. by Aiki (Greenwillow)

WHO'S SICK TODAY?  
by Lynne Cherry (Dutton)

THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS INSIDE RALPHIE: A BOOK ABOUT GERMS  
by Beth Nadler, illus. by John Speirs  
based on the series by Joanna Cole, illus. by Bruce Degen (Scholastic)

ACHOO!: ALL ABOUT COLDS  
by Patricia Brennan Demuth, illus. by Maggie Smith (Grosset & Dunlap)

BACTERIA  
by Howard & Margery Facklam (Holt)

BODY BATTLES  
by Rita Golden Gelman, illus. by Elroy Freem (Scholastic)

GERMS! GERMS! GERMS!  
by Bobbi Katz, illus. by Steve Bjorkman (Scholastic)

HENRY AND MUDGE GET THE COLD SHIVERS  
by Cynthia Rylant, illus. by Sucie Stevenson (Bradbury)

LET'S TALK ABOUT HAVING THE FLU  
by Elizabeth Weitzman (PowerKids Press)

THE TORTILLA CAT  
by Nancy Willard, illus. by Jeanette Winter (Harcourt Brace)

