

Germ-o-rama

by Lydia Lukidis

Greetings! My name is Mr. Ash and I'm an itty bitsy germ. At first I was living in Marcia's body. She didn't wash her hands after she went to the bathroom. Then she hugged her friend Sally. That's when I jumped into Sally's body.

Atchoo!! Now I made Marcia and Sally sick!

Everybody gets sick sometimes. It's because of me and all the other germs. But what are germs? How do we make people sick?



Germs are everywhere. They are at your house. They are also in your school and even at the park. They are tiny and you can't see them with your eyes. You would need a microscope to see them. Some germs spread diseases. There are two main types. They are viruses and bacteria.

Bacteria are little creatures. They can live outside your body. They can also live inside you. Some bacteria are really nasty. They can cause infections. They can cause a sore throat, tonsillitis, ear infections or pneumonia.

Not all bacteria are bad though. Some kinds of bacteria are actually good for your bodies. They keep you balanced. For example, good bacteria lives in your intestines. They help your body digest food. Good bacteria are sometimes called "probiotics".

Viruses are a bit different. They can only live inside you to survive. They can also live in a plant or animal. Whatever they live in is called the "host."

They can spread and make you sick. They can cause yucky diseases like the flu, measles, and chicken pox. Good thing viruses don't live long.

So how do we germs get around? Easy! We surf around in the air through sneezes, coughs, or breaths. We also travel in sweat, saliva, and blood. Some of us, like me, can travel from one person to another if they touch each other. We can live on objects for a while, like a doorknob. When the next person touches that doorknob, poof! I jump into their body.



So how can you protect yourself against me and all my buddies? The best way is to practice good hygiene. This means keeping yourselves clean. That way you have less chance of getting sick. Here are some good tips for keeping us germs away: wash your hands with soap often; cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze; cover your mouth when you cough; use tissues to clean your nose.

If you do all these things, you will be prepared to battle germs like me!

1. List the two main types of germs.

_____ and _____



2. In the article you learned several characteristics about bacteria, what was the characteristic about bacteria that was not mentioned in the article.

- A. ____ Bacteria are creatures that can live inside and outside of the body.
- B. ____ Bacteria causes diseases like the flu, measles chicken pox.
- C. ____ Some bacteria are good for the body like the ones that help with digestion.
- D. ____ Good bacteria are also known as probiotics.

3. Germs travel around in a lot of ways. In the box below, circle all the ways that germs are spread according to the article.

Coughs ____ vitamins ____ sleeping ____ saliva ____
Sneezes ____ blood ____ breaths ____ showering ____
Sweat ____ vaccines ____ objects ____ Smiles ____

4. Give one way you can protect yourself against germs. (Use a complete sentence.)
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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. _____ p o c r i c e m s o
hint: a device used to see really tiny things
2. _____ b o o k d r o n
hint: the part of a door that you turn to open
3. _____ g e y i n h e
hint: things you do to stay healthy and clean
4. _____ t i s i n t e s e n
hint: long tubes in your body that help you digest food
5. _____ m o n p n e u i a
hint: a disease that causes the lungs to get inflamed

6. _____ t a r i b e c a

hint: tiny creatures that live inside or outside your body; can cause infections

7. _____ s u v i r

hint: a tiny form of living matter that can only survive inside you; can cause diseases

8. _____ s i s t e s u

hint: thin paper squares you use to clean your nose