

1 Read the article. Choose the correct words to complete the descriptions of the paragraphs below.



Did the COVID-19 pandemic make our immune systems weaker?

1 When you eat a tortilla chip at a party, around 10,000 bacteria could go into your mouth. Is that bad for your health? Actually, many scientists believe that coming into contact with microbes such as bacteria helps your immune system to develop. In 1989, an epidemiologist called David Strachan started the 'hygiene hypothesis'. According to Strachan, living in an environment that is too clean can lead to allergies or to diseases such as asthma.

2 In 2020 and 2021, most of us stayed at home, frequently washed our hands and stayed away from other people. As a result, we didn't come into contact with many microbes. So did our immune systems become weaker? According to Graham Rook, a microbiologist, our immune systems learn from the first day of our lives which microbes harm us and how to fight them. Even if we spend a whole year without coming into contact with many bacteria, our bodies remember how to deal with them.

3 However, research shows that our immune systems can become weaker when we feel lonely or stressed. During lockdowns, many of us didn't see our friends and we worried about our health and our family's health. There are several simple things that you can do to help your immune system: relax, get in touch with friends, sleep more, eat a healthy diet and do some sports!

- Our immune systems ... microbes.
a need b don't like c avoid
- Our bodies ... to deal with microbes.
a don't know how b remember how
c find it difficult
- Be ... and have fun with friends.
a healthy b worried c careful

2 ★★☆☆ Complete the definitions with words from the article.

- very small living things that can be good or bad for people: **m**icrobes _____
- when you feel unhappy because you have no friends or people to talk to: **l**_____
- the smallest and most simple forms of life; these live everywhere – in the air, in water and even in our own bodies: **b**_____
- when you come into contact with microbes, this stops you from getting ill: **i**_____ **s**_____
- a kind of illness: **d**_____
- when one thing causes another to happen:
l_____ **t**_____
- when something hurts us or damages our bodies:
h_____
- to take action to solve a problem:
d_____ **w**_____

3 ★★☆☆ Read the article again. Complete the sentences with one word.

- When you're at a party and you eat a tortilla chip, a lot of bacteria could go into your **m**outh_____.
- According to David Strachan, if your house is too **c**_____, you can become ill.
- The article says that in 2020 and 2021, people kept their hands very clean and didn't come into contact with many **m**_____.
- Graham Rook thinks that a human's **i**_____ system knows which microbes are bad because it came into contact with them before.
- Having nobody to talk to can make our immune systems **w**_____.
- It's important to **w**_____ less to stay healthy and help your immune system.
- Sleeping for longer than usual is **g**_____ for your immune system.

4 Answer the questions. Write complete sentences.

- Is it important for you to stay healthy? Why?
Yes, it is. I want to stay healthy to live longer.
- What do you do to stay healthy?

- Whose idea, David Strachan's or Graham Rook's, would you like to find out more about? Why?

- How did you deal with the COVID-19 pandemic? What was the easiest and the most difficult thing for you?

For me, these exercises were ... easy OK difficult