

GERMS 101

Germ are microscopic life forms that exist all around us. There are 4 main types of germ that can cause illness: bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa.

- Bacteria – are one celled organisms. There are approximately 1600 species of bacteria, but less than 200 species actually make us sick, such as: *Group A streptococcus bacteria* - causes “strep throat”, *Escherichia coli* (commonly called “E. coli”) can cause food poisoning & urinary tract infections
- Viruses – are even smaller than bacteria. Unfortunately, unlike bacteria, antibiotics do not work on viruses. Some examples are viral illness include: the “common cold”, the flu cause by the *influenza virus*, chicken pox cause by the *varicella zoster virus*
- Fungi – are simple plants that can grow on our bodies. Fungi thrive in warm, moist, dark areas of the body. Some examples of fungal infections are: *Athlete’s foot* and *Candida* – a yeast, similar to a fungus, that can cause diaper rashes or thrush
- Protozoa – are one celled organisms that love moisture and commonly live in fresh water, oceans, and soil. Some common illness caused by protozoa include: *Giardiasis* – diarrhea and abdominal pain caused by the Giardia lamblia parasite and *Malaria* – caused by the Plasmodium species through an infected mosquito

(Source: www.kidshealth.org)

QUIZ

1. “Zoonotic infection” is the term used to describe an infection transmitted from animals to humans. True or False?
2. People can get Salmonella from pet iguanas, snakes, and turtles. True or False?

Quiz Answers

1. True – certain illness can not be transmitted to humans (distemper, heartworms, etc), but some can such as rabies, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Campylobacter jejuni, tapeworm, ringworm, & cat scratch fever!
2. True – reptiles shed Salmonella in their feces and it can cause abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and fever. Children are at risk for more serious illness such as meningitis and sepsis as a result of Salmonellosis!

(For more info visit www.kidshealth.org)

HAND WASHING TIPS

- Wash before eating and cooking
- Wash after touching animals
- Wash after using the bathroom
- Wash after blowing your nose, coughing, & sneezing
- Use warm water
- Use soap and lather for 10-15. Make it fun by singing a favorite song!
- Use colorful soap made for kids – some even come in fun shapes and scents!
- Make sure to get in between your fingers, under fingernails, and around the wrists
- Rinse & dry well with a clean towel

WHEN SHOULD STUDENTS STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL?

- For a temperature above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Student must be fever-free without fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol or Motrin) for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea. Student may return to school 24 hours after last episode
- Uncontrollable, infectious cough
- Suspected communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, lice)
- Suspected infection of the eyes (i.e. conjunctivitis), nose, throat (i.e. strep throat), skin (i.e. scabies), or scalp (i.e. lice)
- A rash of unknown origin – student may return to school when written authorization is received from the health care provider
- Students must stay home for the first 24 hours on antibiotic therapy

QUIZ

1. Children get more colds than adults do. True or False?
2. There are more than 200 viruses known to cause colds. True or false?
3. What is the best way to prevent the spread of a cold or the flu?

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. True
2. True
3. Hand Washing!

(For more info visit www.kidshealth.org)

IT'S COLD & FLU SEASON AGAIN!

It's not always easy to tell the difference between a cold and the flu, but here are some general symptoms that may help differentiate between them:

Flu Symptoms	Cold Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden Onset• High Fever• Severe Exhaustion• Dry Cough• Headache• Decreased Appetite• Muscle Aches• Chills• Usually no sore throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow Onset• No (or mild) Fever• Mild Exhaustion• Severe or Hacking Cough• Usually no headache• Normal Appetite• Usually no muscle aches• Usually no chills• Sore Throat

Important note: Symptoms vary from child to child; call your child's healthcare provider if you suspect the flu.

(Source: www.kidshealth.org)

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