

Christmas Infection Jingle

Here are a few thoughts to think about with your children when you have watched [our video](#).



Christmas Infection Jingle

Dashing to the loo

I feel too ill to play

I wish I'd washed my hands

For lunch the other day

There are germs all around us. They are so small we can't see them.

To show how small they are, 10000 sheets of toilet paper (or playstation controllers) laid side-by-side stretch about 1.6km (1 mile). 10000 viruses (the smallest type of germ) stretch 0.5mm. Have a look on a ruler – or 0.5 mm is also the smallest gap you can see through when you hold two fingers close to your eye.

Most of these tiny germs do us no harm. In fact many do us a lot of good. For example, your skin is covered with friendly germs, and your intestine (where your food goes when you swallow it) is also full of friendly germs. Good germs also make yoghurt.

However, all germs need to stay in their usual home or place. We get poorly when those germs that are supposed to live elsewhere get into our mouths, eyes or through a cut. That is why it is so important to wash your hands before you eat, before you cook and after you have been to the toilet.

Germs that get into our mouths often make our tummies unwell. This makes us feel sick (nauseous), and can make us throw up (vomit) or have diarrhoea (runny poo). That is why Santa in the video is dashing to the loo!

Rudolf's got a cold

He's sneezing left and right

It's not much fun to cough and sneeze

Throughout the day and night

Many germs like to grow in our noses and wind pipe (trachea). When they are there, they can irritate the lining of the nose and make it tickly. This makes us cough and sneeze (and feel rubbish). Often our nose can get red and sore as well... like Rudolf's! Sometimes it is hard to sleep when we are coughing so much.

Our body reacts to the germs in our nose by making lots of special "cells". Although these cells are also tiny (you need a microscope to see them), they are bigger than germs and they gobble them up. Then (believe it or not), they turn into the snot that comes out of your nose when you cough and sneeze. Snot is amazing... it is your body getting rid of germs.

There are loads of simple things we can do to stop the spread of germs to us, to our friends and to our family.

Wash your hands

Especially before you eat, before you cook and after going to the toilet.

Make sure you have everything you need before you start. Warm water – CHECK. Soap – CHECK. Clean towel – CHECK. Time – CHECK. Remember to wash all the sides of your hands and fingers.... It takes a little bit of time to do it well...if you hum the first part of our song that is about right (from “Dashing to the loo...” to “...throughout the day and night” – or about 20 seconds).

Catch a sneeze

When you cough and sneeze a lot of germs come flying out of your nose and can then get into other people (we call that transmission). See an amazing slow motion video of people sneezing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKiQA5e-fPg>

You can reduce this by catching the germs either by putting your hand up in front of your nose and mouth (your hands are now covered in germs and you should really wash them), by using a tissue (throw it away), or by sneezing into your elbow or shoulder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW1yodZJpG8>



Say if you are ill

Sometimes it is really obvious when we are ill (flu, vomiting). But sometimes it is not. Perhaps you just have a headache, or feel colder than usual, or feel sick. Another “good” example is diarrhoea (this has loads of names - the “runs”, the “squits”, the “trots”, and my favourite “chocolate puddles”). When we are old enough to go to the toilet by ourselves we can have diarrhoea and no one else would know. It is a good idea to let a trusted grown up know (parent, teacher, friend) if you are feeling poorly so they can help look after you.

Cook and separate your food

We all love food. But some food has its own natural germs which we need to kill before we eat it. The best example is uncooked meat. Most meat should be well cooked before it is eaten – especially chicken, mince, burgers, sausages and pork. You can tell meat is not fully cooked if it is still pink. If your burger is pink in the middle, tell the chef!

As well as cooking food properly, when we buy uncooked meat, we must always keep it separate from all the other food we can eat straight away without cooking such as bread, cooked meat like ham, cheese, yoghurt, cereal..... separate in the trolley at the supermarket, and separate in the fridge at home.

Your vaccines keep you well

No one loves having needles... but vaccines are a great way to stay healthy. When the doctor or nurse gives you a vaccine, they are actually trying to stop you getting ill in the future. Some vaccines are injected by needles under the skin, others are put up your nose or into your mouth.

It might be hard to believe but vaccines also contain germs. However, scientists have adapted (or changed) these “vaccine germs” so they don’t make us poorly. Instead they actually stop us getting so ill if we come across the germ in the future. So how does that work?

The first time we get a particular germ, our body usually fights it, and gets rid of it. It does this by producing lots of immune cells (there’s that word cell again). We call them B and T cells. These cells are very specialised – they are good at killing that particular germ but usually no others. Once these immune cells have done their job, they hang around in your body watching out for that particular germ, so they can react much quicker if you get infected with it again. As a result, we usually do not get as poorly when we come across a germ we have already had before, because our immune cells are primed to fight it. And what do vaccines do? Vaccines trick our body into thinking we have seen a particular germ before, so if we do get infected by it, even if it is for the first time, we don’t get so ill. How cool is that. And what’s more, if we don’t get ill, then we are much less likely to pass the germs onto our friends and family, so everyone stays healthier.