

# Germs and Vaccinations

## Activity

**Resource:** Vaccination Talks Toolkit

**Grade(s):** 1 2 3

**Division(s):** Primary

## Curriculum Expectations

**Health and Physical Education:** A1: A1.1, A1.2, A1.4, A1.5, A1.6, D1, D2, D3

**Language:** A2, C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, D3

## Overview

- Students recall what they know about germs, ways of preventing germs' transmission to protect their health, and the role of vaccinations.
- Students examine simple media texts to identify the audience, purpose, conventions and techniques used to appeal to their audience, and convey messages.
- Students apply their health knowledge and understanding of media texts to create an illustration or commercial about ways to prevent the transmission of germs and take action to protect their health.

## Materials Needed

- Access to a document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)
- Images of hygiene practices to prevent the transmission of diseases (e.g., handwashing procedures)

## Learning Goals

- We are learning about germs and how they spread between people.
- We are learning about ways to protect ourselves from germs to stay healthy.
- We are learning how to identify the audience and purpose of media texts and create a media text to share what we know about germs and vaccinations and ways to stay healthy.

## Sample Success Criteria

- I understand how germs are spread.
- I can explain ways I can prevent germs from spreading.
- I can identify the message in an image and explain why the image was created.
- I can create a media text to share what I know about germs and ways to protect my health.

## Opportunities for Assessment

- During the Minds-On, use the large group discussion to assess students' understanding of ways to be respectful of others' ideas and choices.
- During the Action, use the Think/Pair/Share and small group discussion to assess students' understanding of procedures for protecting their health and ways of preventing the transmission of disease to others.
- At the end of the Consolidation, use the student-generated media product to assess students' ability to apply their health knowledge to take appropriate actions for their personal health and wellbeing.

## Minds-On

Read the following statements and have students stand up or put their hand up if they agree with the statement and remain seated or with their hand down if they don't.

- "I like winter more than summer."
- "I like carrots more than celery."
- "I like apples more than grapes."

- “I would rather dance than skip.”
- “I like riding a bike more than scootering.”
- “I would rather watch a movie than play a video game.”

Use the following prompt to lead a large group discussion about ways to show respect for others even when there is a difference of opinion.

**Discussion prompt:** We all have different likes and dislikes, ideas and opinions, and sometimes we make different choices. It is important to show respect to each other even when we don't agree so everyone feels safe and included in our classroom. In what ways can we show respect for others even when we don't share the same point of view?

*Student responses may include:*

- “We can listen to each other.”
- “We can ask questions to learn more about what someone is thinking or feeling.”
- “It's ok if we have different ideas and make different choices.”
- “We should always be kind to each other.”
- “We shouldn't tell them their choices are wrong.”
- “We should always use respectful voices when talking to each other.”
- “We should be respectful and not make fun of their choice.”
- “We can respect their choice.”
- “We accept someone for who they are.”

Consolidate the large group discussion by emphasizing that disagreements might seem uncomfortable but when we can disagree while respecting another person's ideas, we are making sure that we include all voices. These kinds of conversations help us share information, learn from others, and grow.

## Action

Share the Learning Goals with students and co-construct the Success Criteria.

Use a Think/Pair/Share strategy and the following prompts to have students recall what they know about germs and ways to stay healthy. Use a [T-chart](#) to record student responses for students to reference during the consolidation.

**Teacher prompt:** “Germs are little organisms that can be found in many places including on plants, animals, and people. We can pass them on to each other and when we get one, sometimes we get sick. This is how we get colds. What are some ways we can pass germs to other people?”

*Student responses:*

- “We can get germs by touching something that has bacteria on it.”
- “Sometimes we can breathe it in because it can be passed through the air.”

**Teacher prompt:** What are some ways we can avoid getting germs or passing them on to others?

*Student responses:*

- “We can wash our hands with soap.”
- “We can use a tissue and sneeze into our elbow.”
- “Brushing and flossing teeth stops bacteria from growing in our mouth.”
- “We can wear a mask when we are sick.”

Divide students into groups of three to four. Use the following question prompts to engage students in small group discussion to develop their understanding of vaccinations, making choices about vaccinations, making connections to their emotions, and thinking about questions they have about vaccinations. Pose each question, checking that students understand the question, then provide time for groups to discuss the question before asking them to share their ideas, record group responses to each question. Alternatively, post the questions in the learning space and use a [Gallery Walk](#) strategy for groups to discuss and record or illustrate their answers. Use the Gallery Walk responses to lead a large group discussion. Consider adapting the questions for student readiness.

**Question prompts:**

1. Sometimes we get needles when we go to the doctor. How do they help us stay healthy? (Student responses might include: We don't get sick even if we contract a germ, they protect us from getting a disease from a virus that is like a germ)
2. Sometimes getting a needle is called being vaccinated. How are vaccinations one way someone can protect themselves from viruses? (Student responses might include: It helps our body fight off a virus; it protects us from getting sick if we are around a virus)
3. Why might someone choose to get a vaccination? (Student responses might include: They are not afraid, they know that it is one way they protect themselves from getting sick, it helps stop the spread of germs to people who might get sick)
4. Why might someone not get a vaccination? (Student responses might include: They might be afraid, there isn't anywhere they can get one near them, they might be allergic to it, they don't want to put anything into their body)
5. Some of our friends and family choose to get vaccinated and some do not. How can we show respect for those who feel differently about vaccinations than we do?
6. What are some things you can do to manage your feelings about viruses and vaccines? (Student responses might include: I can talk to someone about my feelings, I can think about the questions I have and find out more about vaccinations, I can use my breathing to help me stay calm)
7. What questions do you have about vaccinations? (Student responses might include: What will happen when I get a vaccination? How does it help my body fight germs? What are some of the effects I might feel in my body? Do I have to get one if I don't want to?)
8. Who can help you answer your questions? (Student responses might include: my doctor, my family, a health care person, a helpline, a community leader)

Share images that illustrate ways to protect against germs and transmission of diseases for groups to reference, such as [ELMER The Safety Elephant](#), [Properly Cough and Sneeze](#), [Stand Here](#) or [Help Prevent COVID-19](#).

Use the following prompts to lead a large group discussion to have students deconstruct the image to identify the audience, purpose, conventions and techniques used to appeal to their audience, and convey their messages.

**Question prompts:**

- "What do you like about the image?"
- "Who do you think made this image?"
- "Why might they have produced it?"
- "What do you think the person is trying to tell you through the image and words?"

- “How would you change or add to the image or words to add information about germs and ways to protect their health?”
- “What other ways can someone communicate what they know about germs and ways to protect their health?”

## Consolidation

- Share and review the class-generated ideas from the Action part of the activity for students to reference.
- Have students work alone or collaborate with a partner to create an illustration or a 30-second commercial to share with friends. Their illustration or commercial should communicate what they have learned about ways to prevent the transmission of germs and one way they take action to protect their health.

## Ideas for Extension

- Have students share their media products with other students or the class.
- Have students generate the questions they still have and invite local public health representatives to answer the questions.

## Notes to Teachers

- This lesson is not intended to convince students that vaccination is the necessary route to optimum health. Decisions related to vaccines remain the responsibility of the parents/caregivers in the context of their family values and beliefs. Instead, it provides students with knowledge about vaccines as one way to prevent transmission of diseases and the skills needed to participate in informed decisions about their health.
- It is important to provide opportunities for students to listen and learn about diverse views and understand how these may differ from their own.
- Before teaching students about healthy living topics such as vaccinations, educators should reflect on their own assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, and biases, as part of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Educators should carefully consider the ways their perspectives are articulated

to their students and the ways they respond to the ideas of others. An effective way for educators to identify personal bias is through personal reflection. Consider reflecting on these questions to examine personal beliefs and identify potential bias and possible reactions towards the topic of vaccinations.

- What personal biases and beliefs shape my emotional reaction to the content?
  - What steps will I take to support my students so that my personal biases and beliefs will not interfere with my ability to respond professionally to their questions about vaccination?
  - How will I address the curriculum expectations if aspects of it challenge my personal beliefs?
  - In what ways do I demonstrate that I consider and respect the diverse values, experiences, backgrounds, and identities of my students?
  - Is the diversity of my students reflected in the scenarios, activities, and resources used in my classroom?
- Be mindful: When engaging students in learning about vaccinations, be mindful of discussions about COVID-19 in a medical context. Inequities and discrimination in the health care system in Canada have been a cause of trauma for Indigenous and Black people and communities across Canada and a deep mistrust of the health care system<sup>1,2</sup>. Additionally, students may have experienced direct or indirect loss or trauma as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach webpage for tips when engaging students in healthy living topics such as vaccinations.

## Additional Resources

- [Ophea's Vaccination Talks Resource Database](#)
- [Ophea's Vaccination Talks Discussion Guides](#)
- [Ophea's Inquiry Based Learning in Health and Physical Education](#)

<sup>1</sup>Gunn, B. Ignored to Death: systemic Racism in the Canadian Healthcare System. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Health/UniversityManitoba.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Government of Canada. (2022). Social determinants and inequities in health for Black Canadians: A Snapshot. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health/social-determinants-inequities-black-canadians-snapshot.html>