

# Safety Practices for Preventing Infectious Diseases

## 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 effective safety practices to keep themselves and others safe in various situations (e.g., around water, routes to school, safety at home, personal hygiene, and prevention of disease).
- Students examine media texts to identify the audience, purpose, conventions and techniques used to appeal to their audience and convey messages.
- Students use their health knowledge and understanding of media texts to create a poster about guidelines for personal hygiene and the prevention of infectious diseases.

## Materials Needed

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)

- Access to available evidence-informed information about practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and vaccination
- Gallery Walk

## Learning Goals

- We are learning about safety practices to prevent the spread of infections to keep ourselves and others safe.
- We are learning to apply what we know about safe practices to create guidelines to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- We are learning how to share our guidelines with others to help them make informed choices for their safety and the safety of others.

## Sample Success Criteria

- I can identify safe practices that will help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- I can use my knowledge of safe practices to create guidelines to help with the prevention of infections.
- I can identify the topic, purpose, and audience for media texts and produce a media text to inform others about safe practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

## Opportunities for Assessment

- During the Minds-On, use the Gallery Walk to assess students' understanding of rules and practices they know to keep themselves and others safe in various settings.
- During the Action, use the Mind Maps and group sharing to assess students' understanding of safe practices they can use to avoid getting or spreading a virus and how vaccinations prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- At the end of the Consolidation, use the student-generated ideas for an Infographic to assess students' ability to apply their health knowledge to make connections that relate to their own and others' health and well-being while respecting the choices and practices of others.

## Minds-On

- Share the following list of headings for students to reference: “Safety at Home,” “Safety at School,” “Safety with Animals,” “Safety around Water,” “Car Safety,” “Bike Safety.”
- Divide students into groups of four. Use a Gallery Walk strategy for students to recall and record rules and practices they know to keep themselves and others safe in various settings. Provide students with the option of writing their rule or drawing a picture to illustrate it. Once groups have had the opportunity to record their ideas for each setting, invite them to share some of the safety rules and practices listed.
- Using **Direct Instruction**, explain to students that there are also practices that can keep us healthy and safe from contracting viruses that can affect our health and the health of others. Viruses are a type of germ that is spread when we cough or sneeze or touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has sneezed or coughed on or touched. Viruses cause colds, the flu, and other diseases that make us sick. We can maintain practices to avoid contracting a virus or passing it on to other people, such as washing our hands often or sneezing into our arms. One practice that some people might choose to avoid getting sick from a virus is called a vaccination<sup>1</sup>.

## Action

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

Have students remain in their group and provide access to a shared document. Have groups generate and record ideas about safe practices to avoid getting or spreading a virus, including what they know about how vaccinations prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Continue to provide students with the option of writing their safe practices or drawing a picture to illustrate them. Invite groups to share their responses with the class.

*Student responses might include:*

- “We all have to have some vaccinations to come to school, so we don’t spread diseases, but we can choose to get other vaccinations.”
- “I can wash my hands before and after using the bathroom.”
- “I can use hand sanitizer if I can’t wash my hands.”

- “Only drink from your own water bottle and do not let others drink from it.”
- “Sneeze into my elbow to avoid spreading germs.”
- “Stay home if I can when I am sick or play alone to avoid spreading germs.”
- “Getting vaccinated is one way I can help my body fight off a virus.”
- “If we get a vaccination, even if we get a virus, it may not make us sick.”

Once groups have had sufficient time to record their ideas, provide them with access to available resources to help them gather more information and answer questions about vaccinations. Resources might include: [Cover Your Cough, Elmer’s Advice for Fighting Germs and Viruses Like COVID-19, Vaccines Work, and A Kids Guide to Shots.](#)

**Questions might include:**

- “How do vaccines stop the spread of a virus?”
- “How does a vaccine affect my body?”
- “How do I feel about vaccinations?”
- “What do I do to manage my feelings about viruses and vaccinations?”
- “Who do I go to for information? Who can help me understand?”
- “What are some choices I can make to help protect myself against getting or passing on a virus?”

Invite groups to share some of the information they gathered with the class.

Share a poster with students from available resources. Use the following prompts to lead a large group discussion to have students deconstruct the poster to identify the audience, purpose, conventions and techniques used to appeal to their audience and communicate the messages.

**Question prompts:**

- “What do you like about the poster?”
- “What part of the poster captures your attention? Why?”
- “Why did the person who created the poster choose the colours, images, and words they put on it?”

- “Who do you think made this poster? Why?”
- “What messages are communicated through colours, images, and words?”
- “Who would you go to to get more information about avoiding getting or spreading germs to stay healthy?”
- “What would you put on a poster to share what you know about avoiding getting or spreading viruses?”
- “How would you provide your information while respecting other people’s choices about their practices to avoid getting or spreading viruses and stay healthy?”

## Consolidation

- Share and review the class-generated information and questions about practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and vaccinations.
- Inform groups that they have been asked to create a poster or an advertisement that might be posted on their school’s social media. The purpose of their poster or advertisement is to share their health knowledge about practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and vaccination, and strategies to make healthy choices. Have groups collaborate to identify which information they would use from the information gathered and what they have learned to create a poster to share their knowledge with others. Remind groups that their poster should also communicate where to get credible information and the importance of respecting others’ choices of practices even when they differ from their own. Consider co-constructing success criteria for an effective informational poster with students before they create their poster (e.g., consider headings, font size, order of reading/scanning on the page, facts, include words, instructions).
- Invite groups to share their poster or advertisement ideas with the class.

## Ideas for Extension

- Have students create and share their posters with an audience of their choice.
- Invite a local public health official to answer student 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 the 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>2,3</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 Resource](#)

<sup>1</sup>Public Health Ontario. (2022). Infectious Diseases. Retrieved from:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Diseases-and-Conditions/Infectious-Diseases>

<sup>2</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>3</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>