

Learning About Germs

TEACHER BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

Although teaching about germs is a great strategy for developing and maintaining healthy habits, there is also a need to be somewhat careful to avoid germaphobia.

1. Ask the students if they have ever been sick and brainstorm a list of all the illnesses they may have had.
2. Ask how they felt when they were sick. (*Their head, their energy, their stomach.*)
3. Ask what they did when they were sick. (*slept, threw up, had diarrhea, had chills, had a fever, felt hot, sweated, no appetite and couldn't eat*)
4. Once the topic of throwing up or barfing, or upchucking and diarrhea have come up. This is a good time to let the students know that their body is actually trying to get rid of these germs. We get fevers because germs don't survive when it's really hot, we throw up or get diarrhea because the message went to the brain that something bad in in our stomach and it's time to get rid of it. Our body tries hard to get rid of the bad germs and while it's doing it, we often feel sick.
5. Ask why they think they got sick. This should lead into the topic of germs. (*Germs are really just bacteria and viruses but it's important to have children know that not all germs are bad, some germs are good—good bacteria helps us digest food for instance*)
6. Once the topic of germs comes up, mention that there are good germs but we are going to talk about the germs that make us sick.
7. Germs are everywhere, in the air, in the water, in the dirt on us.
8. Review what a high touch area is and brainstorm all the high touch areas at home and at school.
9. Ask the students if they have ever heard the word 'Contagious', if so, brainstorm a meaning for contagious.
10. Ask how they think they caught a flu or a cold. This helps with the theory of contagion, (my sister had a cold and I caught it) ask how they might have caught it from their sibling or parent.