

Grades  
**K to 1**



**HERE**  
For Healthy Schools

**GERMS**

# SHAKE THOSE GERMS!

**THE BIG IDEA:**

Germs are so tiny, we can't see them.  
By substituting finger paint for germs,  
students can see for themselves how germs are  
spread and why handwashing is so important.

**HEALTHY HABITS**

Presented by Lysol® in collaboration  
with NEA and National PTA.

Education Standards: (NHES) Health: 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 7.2.1, 7.2.2;  
(CCSS) English Language Arts: SL.K-1.5; (NAEA) Visual Arts: VA.K-4.1

## Goals and Skills

### Students Will:

- Understand that germs are too small to see, and live on hands and surfaces
- Demonstrate how to prevent and reduce the spread of germs with handwashing
- Express their ideas about germs through art

### Supplies and Preparation:

- Finger paints
- Heavyweight craft paper
- Access to a sink with soap and water
- Towels for drying

### Background for Teacher

You also learn more about when and how to wash hands: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>  
To learn more about germ prevention, visit [lysol.com/HERE](https://www.lysol.com/HERE)

## Instruction Steps

**1. The Facts about Germs.** Begin by inviting students to share what they think germs are. Explain what germs are to students with the following facts:

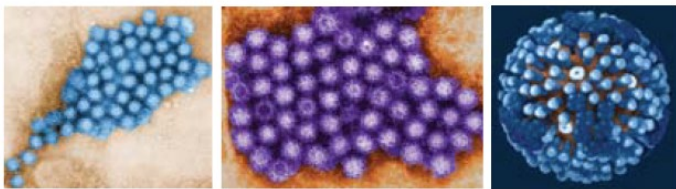
- Germs are tiny living things called bacteria or micro-organisms that are all around us all the time
- They are so tiny you can't see them unless you use a microscope
- Some germs help our bodies work properly, but others can make us sick
- Germs can live on all kinds of things...hands, noses, desks, and bathrooms
- People spread germs by touching things, and by sneezing and coughing
- Keeping hands and surfaces clean helps prevent bad germs from spreading

**2. Shake Those Germs!** This fun and colorful activity will help children see how germs can spread. Line up everyone in the class. First, cover your own hands with finger paint. Then, shake hands with the first student in line. Have that student shake the next person's hand, and so on. Ask students to notice how much paint spread from one person to the next. (Remind students not to touch their clothes, faces, and other items while the finger paint is on their hands!)

**3. How Germs Spread.** Explain that now you will pretend that the paint represents germs. Have everyone look at his or her hands again. Have students explain where the paint came from (you) and how it traveled. Touching other people or surfaces is one way germs can spread.

**4. Extend the Lesson.** Have students make a Germ Portrait using the finger paints. Ask them: What do you think tiny germs look like? When their portraits are finished, have them share and explain their ideas to the rest of the class.

Share the pictures of actual germs and viruses on this page (or download pictures from the Internet).



Close-ups of microscopic germs

**5. Wash those Hands!** End the activity with a good handwashing for all. Using the paint as a guide, determine whether the children have washed off all the germs. Use warm water and soap, and remind everyone to wash their hands (backs, palms, between fingers) for at least 20 seconds. To help kids know how long they should wash their hands, remind them to sing the “Happy Birthday” song from start to finish, two times.

When they dry their hands, is there any color on the towel? If so, that means they didn’t wash their hands enough.

Remind them that handwashing is one of the best ways to keep bad germs from spreading.

**6. Extend the Lesson.** Allow students to add details to their Germ Portraits using pencils, pens, and other art supplies. Encourage students to name and then “autograph” their paintings. If they are able, have students add a written title to their pictures.

### **Additional Resources:**

- CDC - Be A Germ Stopper Poster  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html#stopgerms>
- CDC - BAM! Body and Mind  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/teachers.htm>
- CDC - Healthy Schools Parent Engagement Materials  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/parentengagement/parentsforhealthyschools.htm>
- CDC - Handwashing Stickers  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/stickers.html>
- CDC - Handwashing Posters  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>

