

Special Edition

Olly Pop, our very own health and safety superhero, is ready to help children do all they can do to stay healthy at home. In this special edition, Olly Pop focuses on teaching children about germs and illness prevention while also supporting families as they implement healthy routines and practices at home.



Learning About Germs and Illness

With the recent news of spreading illnesses like flu and coronavirus, it is more important than ever to continue to implement our strong health and safety practices with every child, every day. As children are learning to take care of themselves, we know that families too can benefit from continued focus on the importance of washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, etc. Olly Pop is here to help ensure a focus on health and safety not only as part of our classroom curriculum, but to support families in these efforts at home as well. We consider personal wellness a learning opportunity like literacy and math.



These Olly Pop suggestions center on how to prevent the spread of any germs that can make us sick.

The provided experiences and suggestions will help children explore and answer the following questions:

- ▶ What are germs?
- ▶ How do germs move?
- ▶ How can we keep germs from getting us sick?
- ▶ What other ways do our bodies help us stay healthy?

Upon entering our classrooms, please take a moment to wash your own and your child's hands before beginning other activities.

Suggested activities and materials are intended for various age groups and may not be suitable for all children. Please select only those activities that you feel may work best for your children. Do not allow children to ingest materials and clean up thoroughly after activities are completed.

Books to Support Learning:

Germs Make Me Sick by Melvin Berger | *Germs Are Not for Sharing* by Elizabeth Verdick | *Healthy Kids* by Maya Ajmera
Those Mean Nasty Dirty Downright Disgusting...But Invisible Germs by Judith Anne Rice | *Your Skin and Mine* by Paul Showers

Activity One: Germs on the Move!

Materials:

- ▶ Washable, non-toxic finger paint

Explain to your child that germs use our eyes, noses, mouths, and hands to move from person to person. Ask your child to identify these different body parts by pointing to their own bodies. Make it a game to play together in the car, while waiting in lines, etc.

To help your child visualize the movement of germs, coat his or her previously washed hands with a very thin layer of paint. Then encourage your child to interact with you or their siblings in some way – like handing a ball from person to person, or selecting items on a tray. Once finished, have everyone check their hands or surfaces for pretend germs. How have the germs spread?

Remind your child that this is why we do things like washing our hands, coughing into elbows, and using tissues.



Experiences to Weave In At Home

- ▶ Remind your child to wash hands at appropriate times throughout the day, such as arrival in the classroom or at home, before meals, and the other times noted in the green box on page three. Use these opportunities to tell your child how washing our hands helps us get rid of unhealthy germs.
- ▶ Physical activity is important for wellness and with limitations on being in public spaces during this time, it is important you ensure your child has time for full body activity. When possible, take your child outside for few minutes, even if it is a bit chilly. When time outdoors is not an option, get moving inside by encouraging your child to create their own dance or try practicing your yoga moves together.
- ▶ Eating healthy, exercising our bodies, and getting plenty of rest help keep our bodies from getting sick. Point out and encourage these healthy practices to your child when you see them.
- ▶ Make sure hand washing is easy by providing a step stool in the bathroom so your child can reach faucets easily and making sure soap bottles never run empty. Post a step-by-step guide with photos. Download the [How to Wash Your Hands](#) sign that we use in our centers or create your own.
- ▶ Put facial tissues down low in each room so your child can easily reach them to blow their nose or cover a sneeze. Child-safe mirrors can also help your child clean his or her face independently. Download our [Don't Spread Germs](#) poster to show your child how to cover coughs and sneezes.
- ▶ Encourage your child to help clean by providing materials like paper towels and spray bottles containing soapy water. Note that children should not help with sanitizing.
- ▶ Encourage your child to help with keeping their belongings clean by creating a washing station in a sink for baby dolls and other toys. Fun and clean at the same time!
- ▶ Children learn through imaginary play. Help them set up a doctor's office or a school for dolls or stuffed animals so they can role-play caring for others and staying healthy.

Activity Two: Soap Saves the Day (Recommended for ages 3+)

Materials:

- ▶ Flaked spices such as dill, parsley, and cilantro
- ▶ Dish soap
- ▶ Plates or bowls
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Q-tip

Fill bowl or plate with water and have your child sprinkle flaked spices on the surface of their water. Tell your child to imagine the flakes are like the germs on their hands. They can then dip a Q-tip into the soap and touch the surface of their water. What happened to our pretend germs? Why do you think the germs moved away? Explain that soap does the same thing to real germs when we wash our hands.



Children should wash hands...

- ▶ Upon arrival to a new location or coming in from outdoors.
- ▶ Before and after handling food for a cooking activity or serving/eating food during meals.
- ▶ Before and after playing in sensory tables or going swimming.
- ▶ Before and after taking medication.
- ▶ After toileting or diapering.
- ▶ After wiping nose or coughing.
- ▶ After cleaning or handling trash.
- ▶ After handling animals or their equipment.

Activity Three: Steps of Hand Washing

Materials:

- ▶ Two hand washing posters, one cut into four pieces (optional)

While washing hands at home, ask your child if they can tell you what they do to wash their hands at school. Talk about each step and ask, "What comes first? Then what? And what is next? What is the last step?" Select a song together to sing each time they wash their hands to make sure they are scrubbing long enough.

Download our [How to Wash Your Hands](#) poster. Print one for display and a second to cut up into four strips. Mix up the pieces and challenge your child to put the pieces back together in the right order.

Activity Four: Caught In the Act

Materials:

- ▶ Piece of paper and writing utensil (optional)

Discuss with your child all the things that we can do to keep ourselves healthy. You can write them down on a piece of paper together if desired. These things might include washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes going to the doctor, and many more. You can then encourage your child to take ownership of their own wellness by playing a game together in which your child(ren) "tell" on someone when they catch them doing something healthy.

Support your child in creating a plan to help everyone in the family remember to cover coughs and wash hands.