

Suzy's World

What happens when I get a cold?

Fact

- Some of the symptoms of a cold are a stuffy nose, headaches, coughing, sore throat and sinus pain.
- Cold viruses are very small particles found in the air that give humans those symptoms.
- Cold viruses pass from one human to another when we sneeze, cough or splutter over other people.
- We seem to get more colds in winter when the temperature is more changeable.
- We also get colds when we are "run down" or tired.



Do you know

- Sneezes can travel 2 metres - further than the length of your bed.
- Research shows that children get more colds than adults and that people who live in the coldest climates like the Arctic get fewer colds.
- Although scientists are working on vaccines for viruses new viruses keep being discovered.
- Scientists say that nearly 50% of colds are caused by rhinoviruses. Rhino comes from the Greek word for nose.
- One easy way to reduce the chance of getting a cold is to wash your hands regularly. Before you eat, before you touch your face, after you've been to the bathroom, after you have blown your nose or sneezed... all the time.
- Another really easy way to stop the spread of colds is to sneeze and cough into a tissue and then throw the tissue away (in the bin of course).

Experiments you can do

Make a bicycle pump sneeze.

What you need:

Bicycle pump

Some water

A large sheet of paper or several handy towels

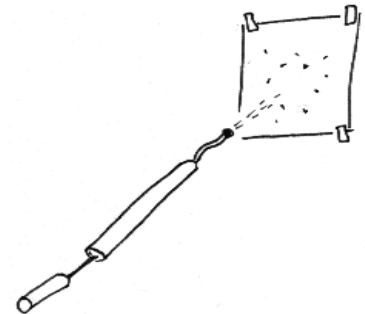
Some tape

Someone to help you

What you do:

Tape the paper or handy towels up on a wall and stand back three lengths of the bicycle pump from it. Pull the pump handle of the bicycle pump back then put a couple of drops of water into the end of the bicycle pump hose. Direct the hose at the paper then push down hard on the pump handle and the water "sneeze" will fly out and spread over the paper. You may need to have several attempts or get closer to the paper.

Imagine the water sneeze was a real one. Germs and nose mucus are spread over quite a distance when you sneeze. By catching a sneeze in a tissue and throwing the tissue away, then washing your hands you can reduce the spread of a cold.



Other Investigations

Talk to your teachers or family about the things you can do to reduce the chance of getting or spreading a cold. Then monitor yourself. Do a mental check on the number of times you wash your hands. Or write up a checklist for yourself and tick off each time you wash your hands. The simple process of washing your hands can reduce the chance of many diseases being spread.