



## Go Away, Germs!

Using common household items, teach your children how easily germs can be spread and why it is important to use soap to wash away germs when handwashing.

### Facts/Information:

- One germ can live more than three hours on your hands.
- After using the restroom, the number of germs on your hands doubles.
- If you are in the ALCOSAN service area, each time that you wash your hands, the dirty water goes down the drain to make its way to our wastewater treatment plant. There, the dirty water is cleaned before it is released back into the Ohio River.



### Materials:

- Two bowls
- Water
- Dish soap
- Black pepper
- A one-gallon resealable, see-through bag
- Clear gel
- Small pom-poms or beads
- Tape
- Dish brush (optional)

### Procedure:

- Gather materials.
- Fill two bowls half-way with water.
- Ask your child what they know about germs.
- Ask your child why they wash their hands with soap.
- Sprinkle pepper into one of the water bowls. Explain that the pepper represents germs. Do not add too much pepper, or else the demonstration will not work as well.
- Dip one index finger in the water bowl with the pepper, and ask your child to look at the pepper on their finger and in the bowl.
- Explain that this is how germs stick onto our skin.

- Next, dip that same index finger into the other water bowl.
- Discuss how easily the “germs” spread from one bowl to the other.
- Wipe the finger off with a paper towel.
- Next, cover one finger with dish soap.
- Now, stick that finger into the center of the water bowl with the pepper. Watch how quickly the “germs” scatter to the edge of the bowl.
- Soap helps to push away the germs. Now you can see the importance of soap during handwashing.



#### Extensions:

- Using a permanent marker, trace both hands onto the outside of the one-gallon resealable, see-through bag.
- Put approx. 10 squeezes of gel into the bag.
- Add pom-poms or beads into the bag to represent germs.
- Close the bag and tape it to a hard surface.
- Using a finger, have your child move all of the “germs” onto the hands. Ask your child to tell you some ways that germs get onto their hands.
- Next, use fingers or a dish brush to wash the germs off the hands by spreading them out, so they no longer are on the pair of hands.
- Ask the child:
  - Why is it so important to use soap each time that you wash your hands?
  - When should you wash your hands?
  - Why do you think germs spread so easily?
  - What other ways can we prevent germs from spreading?

#### Songs:

- **Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"**  
Wash, wash, wash your hands.  
Soap will make them clean!  
Scrub the germs 'til they fall off.  
And they go down the drain!
- **Sing to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"**  
Twinkle, twinkle little star.  
Look how clean my two hands are.  
Soap and water. Wash and scrub.  
Get those germs off, rub-a-dub.  
Twinkle, twinkle little star.  
Look how clean my two hands are.