



Staying Healthy Around Your Animals

Germapalooza Facilitator Guide





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Background Information

Animals, including humans, have microscopic-sized organisms (**microbes**) that live naturally in their digestive tracts. Each animal's intestinal microbes are unique. Microbes that occur naturally in an animal's intestines can be beneficial, including helping to aid digestion, immunity, and responses to stress.

In addition to naturally-occurring microbes, digestive tracts can also contain other microbes that can cause illness in humans or other animals. Microbes that can cause illness are called **pathogens (germs)**. Disease-causing microbes include some types of **bacteria**, specific types of **fungi**, and **viruses**.

Pathogens can be spread from one animal (or human) to another in a variety of ways. The specific mode of transmission varies by the type of pathogen and the environment, but common ways include **direct contact** (e.g., touch) an infected animal or human; **through the air** (e.g., via coughs or sneezes); **contaminated food or water**; contact with **contaminated surfaces** (e.g., floors, fences, counters, door handles); **insect vectors** (transmit pathogens through bug bites); or bodily fluids (e.g., mucous; blood).



Learning Objectives

At the end of this activity, participating youth will:

- Understand that **microbes** are found naturally in animals' (and humans').
- Recognize that some microbes can be helpful and others are harmful.
- Understand that **germs** are microbes that cause illness.
- Realize that germs can be found anywhere (e.g., soil, feces, mucus)
- Know that common types of germs include viruses and bacteria.

Experiential Learning Cycle

This activity is designed around the three-step learning cycle: Experience, Reflection, and Application. To help youth achieve maximum learning and transfer of knowledge and skills, it is important to complete all three steps of the learning cycle.



Activities



Opening Questions

- Describe the smallest type of living thing you know.
- Explain what you know about how you get sick.
- Explain what you know about how your animals get sick.
- Describe how you think you can help yourself or your animals from getting sick.



Experience

Experience: Watch the video: [Germapalooza](#)

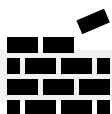
Reflection I:

- Tell me what you liked about the video.
- Describe your favorite character, and why.
- Tell me one thing you learned from the video.
- As a group, let's try to retell the story from the video from the beginning and decide upon the most important points/information the characters were trying to share with you.

Experience (Repeat): Watch the video a second time: [Germapalooza](#)

Reflection II:

- After watching the video again, tell me something more, if anything, you learned.
- Identify any words that were unfamiliar to you. What were those words?
- As a group, let's try to retell the story from the video again. We'll start from the beginning and decide upon the most important points/information the characters were trying to share with you.



Vocabulary/Concept Building/Application (Facilitated discussion with the youth)

During Reflection periods I and II of the activity, it is important that the facilitator listens carefully for understanding (or misunderstanding) of concepts and terms put forth through the video. The goal is for youth to develop a correct understanding of concepts and terms using their own words. If concepts and terms are not discovered by the youth after Reflection I and II, the facilitator should first ask open-ended questions to prod understanding; subsequently, concepts and terms can be introduced. Misunderstandings should also be corrected.

Important terms and concepts from the *Germapalooza* activity:

- **Microbe:** Microscopic-sized organisms; many are beneficial.
- Main types of disease-causing microbes: Some **bacteria** and **viruses**.
- **Germ:** Microscopic-sized organisms that can cause a disease.
- **Disease transmission:** How a germ is spread to an animal or human

Application

The application phase of this curriculum activity could be a farm or fair visit. This would occur ideally after all video-based experiences have been completed. Facilitators can ask youth open-ended prompts that link video content to the farm or fair visit. Examples of prompts include:

- Describe places you observed on the farm or at the fair where germs could be found (e.g., on the ground; in the food trough; in the water trough; on a fence board).
- Describe any animal behavior you observed on the farm or at the fair where germs could have been transmitted (e.g., animals touching noses; animals rubbing their noses against a fence or a food/water trough).



About

[Animal Poo & You](#) is an integrated curriculum designed to introduce basic concepts of zoonotic disease prevention to youth engaged in agricultural activities. Lessons are designed and developed using vocabulary and images, presented in a musical narrative, appropriate to youth aged 5-8 years. Each animated lesson presents the student with information on a specific area of zoonotic disease prevention and may be viewed individually or in a classroom setting.

Animal Poo & You is a collaborative project between the [California Department of Public Health](#), the [California Department of Food and Agriculture \(CDFA\)](#), the [University of California 4-H Youth Development Program](#), the [California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom](#), [Bike City Theatre Company](#), and [Studio Creatch](#). Financial support for this project was provided in part by the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists](#), and the [CDFA Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Program](#).