



## Germ Squirm Kids and Safe Food Handling

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In this series, the developmental skills in the preschool years are divided into three general levels:

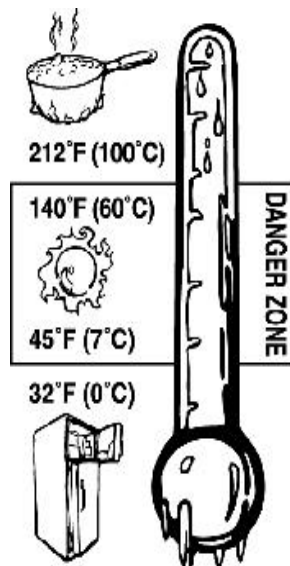
2-3 years = naming and identifying

3-5 years = sorting and classifying

4-6 years = ordering, sequencing and comprehension

### Objectives

- To name ways germs get into foods and practice safe food handling rules.
- To name hot, cold, and room temperatures as safe or unsafe for food, at home, at the store, and eating out.
- To name protein foods and safe food handling rules.
- To look for places to store foods safely.



### Temperatures

Germs are both good and bad. Some good germs live in the gastrointestinal tract of the body to help make vitamins. Good germs are also used to make some foods, such as pickles. Bad germs that make you sick are carried by dirt. Some bad germs eat sugar and decay teeth. Most germs need food, moisture, and warm temperatures to grow. Animal protein foods (milk, meat, fish, poultry, eggs) provide food and moisture for harmful bacteria to grow at warm temperatures in the danger zone from 40°-160°F (4°-71°C). Boiling temperatures kill most germs. Bacteria do not grow at cold temperatures, but they are not destroyed.

# Germ and Dirt

3-5 years

Name dirt and places where germs live and hide.

<i>Where do you find dirt?</i>	
garden	floor
trash cans	sinks
spills	garbage
dirty dishes	pets
clothes	money
ridges and crevices in skin, hair, fingernails	
body fluids: runny nose, sneeze, cuts and scratches	

Use a microscope/magnifying glass to look for dirt where germs hide.

What do you do to prevent germs from spreading?

**Tell about germs.**

Locate stories/books about germs for the book area and story time.

What is a germ? a good germ? a bad germ?

4-6 years

**Make a germ squirm**

Name unsafe habits that spread germs. Name safe habits that get rid of germs.

Cut out pictures or make label cards to discuss germs in these settings:

handling money	changing diapers
petting an animal	finding food with a bite out of it
catching bugs	toileting
drinking from the family water jug	foods licked by pet
tasting from serving/cooking spoon/dish	sneezing on foods
food with ahir or bugs on it	finding food on floor, ground, or playground

Why is each of the above unsafe? What would you do? Is licking a safe way to get things clean?

Make safety labels for food handling in the classroom and other environments.

- hand washing after toileting, playing outside, or sneezing
- clean clothes/apron and clean kitchen

What pictures or symbols mean safe or unsafe to you? to others?

**Classify ways to fight germs when eating out.**

- How do salad bar sneeze guards protect food from grownups? from children?
- How do waiters/waitresses in restaurants keep hands clean?
- Who should wear plastic gloves?
- When are plastic gloves no longer safe?
- When is licking fingers safe?
- What do workers wear at fast food restaurants to keep hair out of food? (hats/hairnets)

## **Clean Food Handling Practices**

**3-5 years**

**Name and demonstrate steps for washing hands, utensils, and food**

What things are needed for washing hands? utensils? food?

1. Water
2. Rubbing/Scrubbing
3. Soap (not for food)

What items are needed for hand washing at home? in a restaurant? on a trip?

Practice washing hands and foods.

Practice washing lettuce, potatoes, carrots.

Which foods must be washed?

- Garden potato vs. canned potatoes
- Fresh fruits/vegetables vs. canned vegetables
- Milk/cheese

What can you do to be clean when working with food?

(Wash hands, wear hat and apron)

**Name rules for cleaning up spills**

Spilled water or crumbs on tables, counters, and floors can be cleaned up by children if the spill is manageable; but not if there is broken glass; hot grease; or sticky mess.

Give children sponges, brushes, squirt bottles, dust pans, brooms and mops to practice cleaning floor, walls, counter, and tabletops in the classroom at snack and at meal time. Use label cards for clean/dirty, floor/table equipment. Praise them for their attempts even if an adult must clean again.

What spills can kids clean up? adults?  
(Use label cards for child, for adult)

#### 4-6 years

#### Safe practices for food safety and cleaning supplies

Learn symbols such as "Mr. Yuk" for poison identification in the kitchen; in the bathroom.



*Permission to use the Mr. Yuk poison warning symbol given by Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, 1992.*

Why are some cleaning supplies for the floor? for the table? and others for food?

What pictures symbolize opposite concepts such as safe/unsafe? clean/dirty? hot/cold?

## Food Storage at the Grocery, at Home, and in Restaurants

#### 3-5 years

#### Name places foods are stored/kept

What foods are stored in the cabinet? refrigerator? freezer?

How do these things get hot/cold?

#### Using Thermometers

Use thermometers to label/classify temperature of food storage places.

<i>Hot</i>	<i>Warm</i>	<i>Cold</i>
summer time	room temperature	freezing
cooking temperatures	buying, transporting, preparing, eating	refrigerator
boiling/burning		freezer
grilling		winter
radiators		ice

Collect different kinds of thermometers and practice reading temperatures in various settings (outside the house, in refrigerator, in the sun, on ice).

At what temperature/place should foods be stored? Use examples from the food guide pyramid.

## Name protein foods you eat

Most protein foods spoil easily at room temperature. (Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt -- keep them cold!)

Plan a classroom shopping trip to the play grocery with containers and bags.

Should frozen foods be bought first or last?

Should protein foods be bought first or last?

Where will each purchase be stored?

Collect food pictures or containers for play area.

Practice safe food storage in refrigerators and cabinets. Use pictures of real refrigerators and cabinets. Mix up containers and allow children to correct your "storage mistakes."

## 4-6 years

What foods spoil while shopping? during preparation? and during storage? How can you tell?

Never taste a food that looks bad (moldy, bruised, wilted, dirty) smells (putrid, sickening), or feels funny (slimy, dry).

What foods seem spoiled but are safe to eat? (mint with green center, limburger cheese, curdled gravy, sour cream, cottage cheese)

Look at, smell, and feel moldy bread or cheese or soured lunchmeat or ground beef. Is this food safe to eat? Why or why not?

## Creative Play

<i>Prop Box-- Waiter/Waitress</i>	
apron; hat (hair covering)	trays
scrub cloth	kitchen utensils
scraper	table service
nonbreakable dishes	straws
napkins	tickets
mop and sponge	toy foods

## Creative Play

How do places in the community keep dishes clean?

Tour local kitchens, cafeterias, and restaurants. Look for ways food work areas and eating areas are kept clean. (scrape dishes, rinse dishes, hot water, soap, storage)

***Clean Dish Prop Box***

plastic/metal tub(s)	stacking rack
rubber spatulas	unbreakable dishes
brushes	sponges
squirt bottles	play food

***Prop Box/Carried Food/Picnic Safety***

picnic basket	juice
hard cooked eggs	cookies
meat sandwich	napkins
peanut butter sandwiches	paper or plastic ware
ground or table covering	