

Clean Me Up, Snotty

Children are fascinated by their bodies and the things they can do...or produce. A lot of this stuff is kind of gross, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't talk about it! Understanding how our bodies work is important. In this activity, learners will explore the chemistry of mucous (aka "snot"), and its importance to our health.



Recommended Age: 5+

Time needed: 10-15 minutes

Link to the Video:

https://youtu.be/wuRPM_RFmdc

What You Need

- Unflavored gelatin
- Hot water
- Corn syrup
- A small bowl
- A spoon
- Breakfast cereal; or crumbled cookies or crackers



What You Do

- Pour 1 ½ packets of gelatin into a bowl. Stir in ¼ cup of hot water until the gelatin is dissolved.
 - The gelatin represents the proteins that are in your snot.
- Mix in about ¼ cup of corn syrup--enough to make a thick (but not too thick) glop.
 - The corn syrup represents the sugars that are in your snot.
- Stir your mixture. Try scooping some up into a spoon then pour it back into the bowl. What does it look like? How does it behave? It should be the mostly clear color of healthy snot, and pour easily.
- Your play snot is sticky! Why do you think that is?
 - Snot's main job is to prevent dirt, dust and germs from going up your nose and into your lungs.



- Mix in some cereal or crumbled cookies.
 - These represent dirt and germs.
- Stir the crumbs into the snot until you've got a sticky clumpy ball. That ball is made of snot, dirt and germs! You don't want that stuff going into your lungs.
- We call these balls of snot and dirt "boogers." Now that you know what boogers are really made of, you can understand why you don't want to eat them. Your snot just did all that work to keep them out of your body!

Tips for Adults

- Don't be afraid of talking about snot and other gross body stuff! Kids have questions about their bodies, and it's good if they feel comfortable talking to you about them.
- To clean up this activity, scrape as much as you can into the trash, and then clean your bowl and spoon under very hot running water.



Learning and Skills Connection

- **Curiosity:** Wondering about the world, wanting to explore, willingness to try new things and take risks
- **Investigating:** Observing with all the senses, asking questions
- **Being playful:** Engaging with a playful spirit; fooling around with alternatives; making and breaking rules; taking a whimsical approach, tapping into humor; feeling pleasure and joy

Doing STEAM with Kids

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. There are lots of ways you can explore these letters, apart or together. Ask your child to make predictions, describe what they see, and to imagine possibilities and solutions. Don't worry so much about the "right" answer. Developing curiosity, and problem-solving skills are important first steps to doing STEAM!

