

War on Germs

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Recent Studies

A study done by Master et. al. showed in a study done with elementary school children, those that washed their hands at least 4 times per day were absent fewer days than those who washed their hands as normal. Minneapolis Public Schools has set a standard for students to attend school 95% of the school year in order to perform at a higher academic level.

Master D, Hess Longe SH, Dickson H. 1997. Scheduled hand washing in an elementary school population. Family Medicine 29(5):336-339.

Social Issue

We chose to focus on the issue of public health through educating children to wash their hands. We were inspired by the Glo Germ activity we experienced in Foundations lab, and decided that the kids would like the activity too! We thought that public health was important because it is an important aspect of medicine and health in general; it helps prevent diseases before they actually happen. We aimed to teach public health at this early stage to help give the kids the tools to prevent sickness in the future



Project Overview

We went to Sheridan Elementary School and taught the second graders a lesson about hand washing and the effects that unsanitary habits can have on both them and the environment. We first presented a video about what effects not washing your hands has on people and after showed a PowerPoint about what they had just learned. The experiment we had them perform was using Glo Germ lotion and looking at their hands under black light.

Organization

Sheridan Elementary School is located in Minneapolis, MN. It is an arts magnet school that promotes innovation, creativity, and inspiration. We chose to work with second graders because they can understand that hand washing is an important habit to learn, and pass along the habit to their family and friends.

- Communication was a key part in this project. We all learned how to better communicate not only with each other but also with the teachers and kids at the school
- We utilized each other's strengths, combining all of our individual strengths to work collaboratively as one cohesive group
- We became better leaders by working with a large group of kids and presenting to people other than our peers, learning how to teach other at different academic levels
- We were able to successfully execute our goal within the time constraint despite running into challenges such as scheduling conflicts.
- We also had to learn to adapt to new situations

Public Health Facts

- 80% of all infectious diseases are transmitted by touch
- Viruses and bacteria can live for up to two hours on doorknobs, chairs, and tables
- 1 out of 5 people don't wash their hands after using the restroom
- People are less likely to wash their hands at home than outside in public
- "Handwashing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection" -Minnesota Department of Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/>
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/index.html>

