

Practice with Vocabulary for Health, Illness, and Types of Germs

On this page we'll practice vocabulary related to types of germs, health, and illness. "Germs" are micro-organisms that can make people sick. 'Germ' is the common term, because it's shorter, but it would almost never be used in scientific or medical writing. There are many different kinds of germs, causing or contributing to quite a number of diseases. There are also many harmless or beneficial micro-organisms, like the intestinal bacteria that help us digest food.

Words related to Sickness and Health

Put these words into the lists below:

amoeba, antibiotics, bacteria, communicable, contagious, disease, fungi, hygiene,* health, illness, immunization, infection, infectious, medicines, molds, natural remedies (like herbs), sickness, vaccination, viruses

(*Hygiene is sanitary measures like hand-washing and disinfection of surgical tools that help preserve health)

Lists:

1. Words meaning illness

2. Adjectives describing an illness that can easily spread (be passed) from one person to another

3. Names for different types of micro-organisms (tiny creatures) that can cause disease (germs)

4. Ways to prevent and treat disease (including medical treatments)

Match these sentence beginnings and endings

(The verb forms and endings can give you clues. Be sure the verbs agree with their subjects-- the nouns that tell who is doing the action. Also check if the sentences make sense.)

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Researchers conduct experiments | A. should avoid exposure to extreme temperatures |
| 2. Standard procedures for dentists | B. is two potentially independent sentences combined into one. |
| 3. They follow these procedures | C. is a substance made from two or more elements combined. |
| 4. The lab contacted him by phone | D. include wearing gloves and covering their mouths. |
| 5. Children and older adults | E. that exposed the governor's secret bribery of top officials. |
| 6. The reporter wrote a news article | F. to avoid exposure to patients' illnesses. |
| 7. A chemical compound | G. to tell him he had been exposed to AIDS. |
| 8. A compound sentence | H. to find out if their hypotheses are valid (true). |

Answers

Words meaning illness

disease, illness, infection, sickness. (Sometimes we speak casually about “catching a bug.” That usually does not mean taking an insect into our hands but becoming sick through contact with someone else who was sick (being infected by a germ).

Adjectives describing an illness that can easily spread (be passed) from one person to another

communicable, contagious, infectious (We also sometimes informally use ‘catchy’ from ‘to catch a cold.’ Someone might tell a co-worker who fears getting sick: “I’m sneezing and I don’t feel good, but it’s an allergy. It isn’t catchy.”)

Names for different types of micro-organisms (tiny creatures) that can cause disease (germs)

amoeba, bacteria, fungi, molds, viruses. (The word ‘mold’ can mean a tiny plant that can cause illness or allergies or damage to a building. Another meaning of ‘mold’ is a form that can be used to shape cement or certain foods like gelatin. The verb ‘to mold’ means to shape something.)

Also note these adjectives: amoebic, bacterial, fungal, viral.

Ways to prevent and treat disease (including medical treatments)

antibiotics (medicines that kill bacteria and certain other micro-organisms, but not viruses), hygiene, immunization, medicines, natural remedies like herbs, vaccination

Completed Sentences

- 1H. Researchers conduct experiments to find out if their hypotheses are valid (true).
- 2D. Standard procedures for dentists include wearing gloves and covering their mouths.
- 3F. They follow these procedures to avoid exposure to patients’ illnesses.
- 4G. The lab contacted him by phone to tell him he had been exposed to AIDS.
- 5A. Children and older adults should avoid exposure to extreme temperatures.
- 6E. The reporter wrote a news article that exposed the governor’s secret bribery of top officials.
- 7C. A chemical compound is a substance made from two or more elements combined.
- 8B. A compound sentence is two potentially independent sentences combined into one.