

# Do Bugs Need Drugs?<sup>®</sup>

A Community Program for Wise Use of Antibiotics



## Assisted Living Program

February 2006

## Tips on Presenting to Seniors

Many seniors are lonely and they'll be happy to have you visiting them. They like to shake hands.

Many seniors have hearing deficiencies. Speak up. Check with them to make sure everyone can hear you, and invite them to put up their hand if they are having trouble hearing.

Seniors who suffer from types of dementia are unsure of themselves. Try not to put anyone on the spot.

Information processing takes longer as we age. Don't rush your presentation, and allow ample time for someone to respond to questions. There will be many who won't answer questions and a few who are eager.

Seniors move more slowly and often require assistance. Be patient. Ask if they would like help before doing something for them.

Safety is a huge concern. If you are unsure of helping a resident move around, get a staff member.

Keep it simple, but do not be condescending.

With a bit of prompting, someone will know the song. They'll teach you.

Refer to printed materials as a way to review information they have learned.

Always treat seniors with dignity and respect.

## Program outline

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# Preparation

## Call ahead

- Speak with the person on site who is looking after your presentation
- Introduce yourself and your team. Confirm date and time of presentation.
- Ask how many residents and staff will be attending.
- Ask that residents bring bingo daubers to the presentation if they have them.
- Ask how to find the site and the entrance.
- Make sure the site has handwashing facilities close by. If this is not possible ask the staff to provide a basin of water, soap and disposable towels for demonstrating.
- Find out how to turn off or dim the lights in the room.

## For Activities 3 and 4

- Try out the “Handwashing Practice” and “How Germs Are Spread” activities. Know how the activity is supposed to work and that the equipment is in good order.
- If needed, copy more “BUG” bingo cards so that there is one per resident.

## For Activity 5

- Count print materials to ensure there are enough for each resident and staff person your site.

## Kit contents and print materials

- Make sure you have all the items listed on the next page.

## Kit contents

Quantity	Item
1 per person	Name tags (presenters, residents and staff)
1	Glo Germ gel
1	Glo Germ powder
2	Black light with batteries
8	Spare AA batteries
1 set of 15	Photos
15	"BUG" bingo cards
2	Bars of soap for bingo prizes
15	Crayons for name tags and bingo cards

## Print Materials

Quantity	Item
2 per site	Do Bugs Need Drugs? posters
1 per resident and staff	Wash Your Hands stickers
	How to Wash Your Hands sign
	Parent Guide
	Pamphlet
	Crossword
	Word search

# 1. Introductions and Name tags

Notes:

- This presentation is an interactive teaching session for older adults in assisted living.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Ask the residents if they can hear you.
- Introduce yourself. State your name and a bit of personal information.
- Activity can proceed as residents are gathering.

Preparation: Put on large print name tags before starting.

Time: 5 minutes

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## Introductions and name tags

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_ (provide a bit of information about yourself such as your age or where you are from).

It is nice to see you here. Thank you for coming. So that we can get to know you better, we have name tags and have provided name tags for you as well.

- All presenters introduce themselves.
- Assist residents in making their name tags.

## 2. Interactive dialogue - key messages

Notes:

- Remember to speak slowly and clearly. Ask the residents if they can hear you.
- Ask questions, allow residents to participate with answers and then sum up the message you wish to deliver.

Time: 10 minutes

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### Interactive dialogue - key messages

Today we are here to talk about germs – and what you can do to keep from getting sick. This is very important for you because of where you live. When you live together with other people germs can easily spread from one person to another.

What are some illnesses that are caused by germs? Colds would be one example.

*Let residents give some answers.*

*Sum up* – Colds, flu and pneumonia are illnesses that are caused by germs. Many of these illnesses affect the respiratory tract: your nose, throat and lungs.

Can you think of some examples of how germs are spread from one person to another?

*Let residents give some answers.*

*Sum up* - The most common way that germs are passed from one person to another is through the hands.

80% of common infections are spread by the hands. Germs, of course, are very small, so small that they can only be seen with a microscope. Surveys by researchers at the University of Arizona<sup>1</sup> have shown that telephones, handrails, pens and other items that are shared with many people are the most contaminated.

If germs are everywhere, why don't we get sick all the time?

*Ask for resident's responses.*

*Sum up* – Our body protects us against germs and most of the time it does a good job. For example, our skin keeps germs out of our body and our immune system fights germs that might get inside our body.

What are some ways that you can protect yourself against germs?

*Ask for resident's responses.*

*Sum up* – The best way to protect your self against germs is to wash your hands.

In fact this message has been the same for the past 85 years. Here is a quote from the textbook *Hygiene and Sanitation* written in 1920<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds KA, Watt PM, Boone SA, Gerba CP. Occurance of bacteria and biochemical markers on public surfaces. Int J Environ Health Res 2005; 15(3): 225-34.

<sup>2</sup> Ritchie JW, Caldwell JS. New-World Health Series. Hygiene and Sanitation. Book II. New York: World Book Company; 1920, p. 51

A person who is trying to avoid the germs of colds should not borrow pencils, books or other articles from any one who has a cold; he should not touch soiled handkerchiefs, use public drinking cups or stand near any one who is coughing without turning away from him; he should keep his hands away from his own mouth and nose and should **frequently wash his hands thoroughly with soap and water.**

So, when should you wash your hands? You should wash your hands after touching objects that might be contaminated, for example public telephones. It is also important to wash your hands whenever you are doing something that brings your hands up to your face. This is because germs can get into your body through the mucous membranes, the moist pink part of your eyes, nose and mouth. That is why it is especially important to wash your hands before eating.

*Sum up* – It is important to wash your hands as often as you can. At the very least, try to clean your hands:

1. Before you eat
2. After using the washroom
3. After you sneeze or blow your nose
4. After handling objects that are shared with others

It is equally important to wash your hands properly. Use soap; just rinsing with water won't work. When you are finished, dry your hands thoroughly with a towel. This also helps remove germs from your hands and prevents your skin from becoming chapped and rough.

The five steps of handwashing are:

- Wet your hands.
- Apply soap. Use regular soap.
- Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Get in between your fingers and around your fingernails and don't forget the backs of your hands.
- Rinse your hands for 10 seconds to get all of the germs and soap off.
- Dry your hands with a towel.

One way to make sure you use soap for long enough is by singing a song that takes 20 seconds, such as Happy Birthday or A Bicycle Built for Two<sup>3</sup>.

Which song do you want to sing? Is any one having a birthday this week?

*Lead the group in song - Any song will do as long as it takes 20 seconds.*

### **A Bicycle Built for Two**

Daisy, Daisy, Give me your answer, do  
I'm half-crazy, All for the love of you.  
It won't be a stylish marriage,  
I can't afford a carriage,  
But you'll look sweet upon the seat  
Of a bicycle built for two.

For some of you it might be difficult to get to a sink. Alcohol hand rubs are a good option if you cannot wash with soap and water. These are gels that

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<sup>3</sup> The words and tunes to A Bicycle Built for Two and other old favorites can be found at <http://guitar-primer.com/Folk/>

can be applied to the hands and kill most germs. Alcohol hand rubs are not a substitute for handwashing, so it is important to wash with soap and water whenever possible.

*Sum up* - Remember the five steps of handwashing: wet hands, apply soap, rub hands together for 20 seconds, rinse and wipe dry with a disposable towel. Alcohol hand rubs can be used when soap and water are not available.

Bacteria and viruses are the germs that cause nearly all of the infections of the respiratory tract. Bacteria and viruses are very different from each other. Although both are microscopic, bacteria are 1,000 times larger than viruses. Bacteria are more complex organisms than viruses and can be attacked by antibiotics. Viruses are simpler and antibiotics have no effect.

Pneumonia, which is a serious illness, is often caused by bacteria. Viruses can cause colds and the flu.

Have any of you had to take antibiotics recently?

*Sum up* – Bacteria and viruses are different. Antibiotics are drugs that work against bacteria. Antibiotics don't work against viruses like colds and flu.

Do you know what happens when someone takes antibiotics when they have a cold or the flu?

Do you think it helps them?

*Ask for residents to respond.*

*Sum up* – Many people hope that antibiotics will help them get better faster, but antibiotics don't work against viruses like colds and the flu.

Something else happens though when you take antibiotics for viral infections that can have serious medical consequences. Have you heard of antibiotic resistance? Bacteria are able to quickly adapt to avoid being killed by antibiotics. These bacteria are said to be resistant to antibiotics. The antibiotics don't help the cold, but they cause resistance.

*Sum up* – Bacteria have antibiotic resistance when antibiotics don't work any more. The bacteria become stronger and harder to kill. The potential for bacteria to develop antibiotic resistance happens whenever you take antibiotics. This is why it is important to only use antibiotics when you really need them. Misuse of antibiotics unnecessarily promotes antibiotic resistance.

You may have read about “superbugs” in the newspaper or heard about them on TV. Superbugs are resistant to many antibiotics. Infections that are caused by superbugs are a very serious problem because antibiotics won't work. The best thing you can do is to wash your hands so that you don't get sick in the first place.

*Sum up* - So today we have discussed

- Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infections.
- Viruses and bacteria are very different from each other. Not all bugs need drugs. Viruses like colds and the flu don't get any better with antibiotics.
- Using antibiotics for colds and the flu can cause antibiotic resistance.

### 3. Handwashing practice

Notes:

- Once you know the size of your audience and the availability of sinks, decide whether you have time or the capacity for all residents to wash their hands. If not, consider doing a demonstration and ask for a few volunteers.
- If a sink is not close to your audience, use a basin of water. The water should only be used for one washing.

Preparation:

- Know where the handwashing facilities are on site or use a basin
- Ask how to dim or turn off the lights on site.

Materials:

- Black light
- Glo Germ gel
- Sink or basin
- Soap
- Paper towels

Time: 10 minutes

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#### Handwashing practice

This activity should be done close to a sink, or use a basin. You will need soap and paper towels.

The Glo Germ gel is a tool for teaching proper handwashing. When the gel is on your hands it is invisible in regular light, but when viewed under a black light the gel glows.

The Glo Germ gel is non-toxic. It is made of baby lotion and also contains a substance that fluoresces when exposed to ultraviolet light. Dim the lights and show that the gel glows by shining the black light on the container.

Demonstrate handwashing on yourself first:

1. Darken the room. Shine the black light on your hands to show that they do not glow without any gel. Walk among the residents to make it easier for them to see.
2. Apply a small amount of gel (about the size of an ASA tablet) on your hands and rub your hands together to distribute to both the front and back of your hands. Shine the black light on your hands to see the glow.
3. Without the black light wash your hands using good handwashing technique. Ask participants to sing the chosen song.
4. Shine the light on your hands to see how well you have washed.

All residents and staff repeat the exercise or proceed with a few volunteers.

## 4. How germs are spread and “BUG” bingo

Materials:

- Glo Germ powder
- Black light
- 15 photographs of shared objects
- “BUG” bingo cards
- Crayons

Time: 10 minutes

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### How germs are spread

Glo Germ powder is used to show how germs can be spread via the hands. Similar to Glo Germ lotion, when the powder is on your hands it is nearly invisible in regular light, but when viewed under a black light the powder glows.

The Glo Germ powder is non-toxic. It is made of melamine, a substance that fluoresces when exposed to ultraviolet light. Dim the lights and show that the powder glows by shining the black light on the container.

Shine the black light on your hands to show that they do not glow without the powder. Sprinkle a small amount of powder (one shake) on the palms of your hands and show that they glow under the black light.

Explain that the glow germ powder will be transferred from your hands to objects that you touch, and that you will look to see where the powder has been deposited later.

## Hot spots

Initiate a discussion with your group to identify “hot spots” in their facility. Hot spots are surfaces that are touched by many people. The bingo game uses photographs of potential hot spots.

### “BUG” Bingo

- Hand out bingo cards/crayons to each resident.
- “Shuffle” the 15 large photographs. Call bingo using the photographs and corresponding letters, for example “under the “B”, playing cards.”
- Participants mark pictures off on bingo cards using daubers or crayons.
- Offer assistance where necessary.
- Once all pictures are covered on a card, the resident calls “Bingo”
- Congratulate the winner(s) and present the prize (bar of soap)!

Ask residents / staff if there are other objects that should have been included in the set of photographs.

Interesting fact: Money is particularly dirty. Over 90% of the one dollar bills in circulation in the United States are contaminated with cocaine.<sup>4</sup>

### How germs are spread (continued)

Remind residents about the Glo Germ powder and that you are now going to look for traces of the powder in the area where you have been working. Dim the lights. Explain that the glow shows which objects were touched during your presentation.

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<sup>4</sup> Jenkins AJ. Drug contamination of US paper currency. *Froensic Sci Int* 2001;121(3):189-93.

## 5. Review and thank you

**Distribute resource materials.** The materials are reminders of the key messages. Extras can be left for residents / staff who did not attend. Explain that the materials review the information in your presentation. Suggest that the residents share the information with family members.

For the site:

- 2 posters

For each resident:

- Parent Guide
- Pamphlet
- How To Wash Your Hands sign
- Wash Your Hands sticker
- Crossword puzzle in large print
- Word search in large print

**Sum Up.** Ask residents if they know the three key messages:

1. Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infections
2. Not all bugs are created equal. Bacteria and viruses are different and antibiotics do not work against viruses.
3. Antibiotic resistance is a problem. Use antibiotics wisely

**Ask residents to help.** Be a model for good hygiene:

- Wash your hands
- Discuss the importance of handwashing with family and friends
- Teach by example

**Thank you.** Thank residents and staff for the opportunity to come their site. Indicate that you enjoyed meeting them and that the experience was valuable for you.