

Dirt is good for babies

19th July, 2017



It seems like common sense to most parents to make sure their baby is always in a clean place. Most parents do their best to keep dirt and bacteria away from their little ones. However, a scientist says dirt is an important part of making babies stronger. Dr Jack Gilbert from the

University of Chicago studies the ecosystems of bacteria. He did research into how dirt and bacteria affect children. He published his research in a book called 'Dirt is Good: The Advantage of Germs for Your Child's Developing Immune System'. He told America's NPR news station that: "It's fine to wash their hands if there's a...flu virus going around, but if they're interacting with a dog and the dog licks their face, that's not a bad thing."

Dr Gilbert wrote that letting children get dirty was largely beneficial. Exposing small kids to dirt helps them to build their immune system. Dr Gilbert even argues that children often get allergies because parents try to protect their kids too much and try too hard to clean everything that children use. He said parents now over-sterilize everything in the home. This causes children's immune systems to become too sensitive, which can lead to things like asthma, eczema, and food allergies. Gilbert even defended the "five-second rule". Many people think it is OK to eat something that fell on the floor for fewer than five seconds. Gilbert says it is OK to eat something that fell on the floor as long as the floor isn't really dirty.

Sources: scarymommy.com / immortal.org / npr.org

Writing

Dirt and germs are very bad for babies. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

common sense / clean / bacteria / ecosystems / research / flu virus / a bad thing / beneficial / immune system / sensitive / asthma / food allergies / five-second rule

True / False

- The article says parents do little to keep babies in a clean place. T / F
- Dr Jack Gilbert studies the places where bacteria live. T / F
- The doctor published his research in a newspaper. T / F
- The doctor said it's a bad thing for a dog to lick a baby's face. T / F
- The doctor said dirt helped build a baby's immune system. T / F
- The doctor said parents sterilize things in the home too much. T / F
- Sterilizing everything increases the risk of children getting allergies. T / F
- The doctor said eating food that fell on the floor for 2 seconds was bad. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. bacteria | a. useful |
| 2. affect | b. acceptable |
| 3. research | c. clean |
| 4. fine | d. being in contact |
| 5. interacting | e. truly |
| 6. beneficial | f. germs |
| 7. protect | g. dropped |
| 8. sterilize | h. safeguard |
| 9. fell | i. impact |
| 10. really | j. findings |

Discussion – Student A

- How worried are you about dirt and bacteria?
- How at risk are babies from dirt?
- Are things dirtier now than before?
- What things do we need to clean all the time?
- Are babies stronger than we think?
- How clean is your house?
- Is dirt an important part of making a baby stronger?
- Is it OK for a dog to lick a baby's face?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. common | a. making babies stronger |
| 2. Most parents do their | b. system |
| 3. dirt is an important part of | c. asthma |
| 4. He published his | d. best |
| 5. if there's a flu virus | e. isn't really dirty |
| 6. letting children get dirty was largely | f. going around |
| 7. dirt helps them to build their immune | g. sense |
| 8. lead to things like | h. second rule |
| 9. the five- | i. research in a book |
| 10. as long as the floor | j. beneficial |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How clean are you?
- Are you happy to know that it's OK to get dirty?
- Are parents over-protective nowadays?
- Where is there most dirt in your house?
- Do you eat food that has fallen on the floor?
- What do you think of the five-second rule?
- What questions would you like to ask the doctor?

Spelling

- mncomo sense
- keep dirt and iracbtea away
- a stntseici says dirt is an important part
- He published his hrecsaer in a book
- flu vsuir
- icnatinteg with a dog
- letting children get dirty was largely lnfcibeaei
- build their menium system
- children often get aeellgirs
- become too tsiienvse
- the "five-ocsdn rule"
- as long as the floor isn't earyll dirty

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. j	4. b	5. d
6. a	7. h	8. c	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Toilet Seat

You think toilet seats are the dirtiest places in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't as dirty. Also, tell the others which is the cleanest of these (and why): the kitchen floor, pillows or the TV remote control.

Role B – Kitchen Floor

You think the kitchen floor is the dirtiest place in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't as dirty. Also, tell the others which is the cleanest of these (and why): toilet seats, pillows or the TV remote control.

Role C – Pillow

You think pillows are the dirtiest places in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't as dirty. Also, tell the others which is the cleanest of these (and why): the kitchen floor, toilet seats or the TV remote control.

Role D – TV Remote Control

You think the TV remote control is the dirtiest place in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't as dirty. Also, tell the others which is the cleanest of these (and why): the kitchen floor, pillows or toilet seats.

Speaking – Bacteria

Rank these with your partner. Put the places with the most bacteria at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| • toilet seat | • mobile phone |
| • kitchen floor | • escalator handrail |
| • fridge handle | • remote control |
| • pillow | • computer keyboard |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.