

# Potato Experiment

This experiment will demonstrate the importance of personal hygiene by conducting a science experiment with potatoes.

## Materials:

- Hygiene Potato Graph worksheet (attached)
- 1 pair rubber gloves (wear while peeling the potatoes so that no germs touch the potato during the peeling process)
- 3 potatoes peeled
- 3 Ziploc type baggies

## Procedure:

1. Students will watch as the instructor peels 3 potatoes. The teacher will explain that rubber gloves are being worn so that no germs will touch the potatoes.
2. The first potato will go into a baggie as is. (This is the control group)
3. The second potato will be passed around the class. Have students look at it closely to see if they can see any germs. They can look for dirty spots or other identifying marks. **The purpose is for the potato to be exposed to many hands and many germs. This detail should not be brought up to students at this point however.**
4. The second potato will be put into a baggie and labeled after all students have handled it sufficiently.
5. The students should all wash their hands AFTER they have touched the 2nd potato, but BEFORE they touch the 3rd potato. After students have washed their hands, they will pass around the 3rd potato in the same manner. Again, tell them to look for germs or other identifying marks.
6. The third potato will finally be put into a baggie and labeled.
7. Students will fill out the "Hypothesis - Make A Guess" section of the worksheet. You can have the students work independently or in cooperative groups.
8. Next, students fill out the DAY ONE section for "Observations -Take a look; Data - Write it down; and Graphs - Make it a picture.
9. For Days 2-6 students will observe and fill out the appropriate days on their worksheets. At the end of the last day students will discuss and fill out the "Conclusions - Decide what it means" section of the worksheet.

## Discussion

Sometimes during the 6 days of the experiment, the instructor (or an outside presenter) can discuss personal hygiene. As a whole group, students should be led in a discussion about proper hand washing, how germs are spread (body fluids i.e.. saliva, mucus, blood), and why it is important not to touch other people's body fluid. They should be led to the conclusion that washing hands is the easiest and best way to stay germ-free.