



Children's Hospital
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CHILDRENS Flu Fighters ACTIVITY SHEET

Sneezology 101

Ever wonder why you sneeze or what happens to your body when you do? Following are some interesting – and unusual – facts about this explosive reflex:

- Sneezing, also called sternutation, is your body's way of removing an irritation from your nose.
- Sneezing is an involuntary action. You can't control it.
- Some of the muscles involved in sneezing are the abdominal (stomach) muscles, the chest muscles, the diaphragm (the large muscle beneath your lungs that makes you breathe), the muscles that control your vocal cords, your face muscles, the muscles in the back of your throat and, of course, your eyelid muscles.
- It is virtually impossible to keep your eyes open when you sneeze. Try it!
- Sneezing can send tiny particles speeding out of your nose at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour. That's faster than some major league baseball players can throw a baseball.
- The fastest sneeze ever recorded was clocked at 165 miles per hour.
- Common things that can cause you to sneeze include dust, cold air, pepper, allergies, perfume, a cold, pet dander and pollen.
- One in every three people sneezes as a result of light sensitivity. The condition is called photic sneezing and can be hereditary, or handed down from your parents. Are you one of them?
- Sneezing can't occur while you are sleeping thanks to REM atonia, a bodily state when reflex signals are not relayed to the brain.
- If you sneeze into your sleeve or arm, you stop the dust and mucus from flying out over everything. This can stop the spread of germs.
- You sneeze more when you have a cold or allergy because your body is trying to get rid of the irritation that is making it feel sick.

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