

# Germ Zapper discussion sheet for parents





**WaterAid is determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone everywhere within a generation. By tackling these three essentials in ways that last, people can change their lives for good.**

A hand with fingers spread, holding a blue banner. The hand is positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers spread wide. The banner is a solid blue rectangle with rounded corners, containing white text.

**One vision.  
Three goals.**

# Germ Zapper discussion sheet for parents

**How can I use Germ Zapper to teach my children about the importance of handwashing?**

## **Why are WaterAid talking about handwashing?**

The spread of illnesses like Covid-19 remind us how vital good hygiene is - but what if you didn't have access to clean water to help protect yourself?

When people are denied access to clean water and decent toilets their hygiene and health suffer.

Poor hygiene means children get sick and miss school, adults can't work to support their families and patients are at risk in health centres. Whole communities miss out on opportunities to improve their lives.

In fact, many get no chance at life at all. Every two minutes a child under five dies from diarrhoeal diseases caused by lack of safe water, sanitation and poor hygiene practices.

So when a community gets clean water and decent toilets for the first time, they also have the power to change their hygiene habits. They can keep themselves and their environment clean, stay healthy and stop diseases spreading, and live dignified lives.

## **Explaining WaterAid's role in handwashing to young children:**

In our homes, we have water and soap to keep our hands clean. Not everyone in the world has these things. So for some people, it is very hard to get rid of the germs on their hands. When they eat, they eat the germs too! This makes people very sick. But WaterAid helps people get clean water and teaches them how to wash their hands properly with soap. Then they can keep their hands clean and stay healthy and happy. WaterAid thinks it is really important that we learn about handwashing, and make sure that everyone, wherever they are, does the same to keep happy and healthy.

You can find out more about our work and read through some stories of people that WaterAid help at [www.wateraid.org/uk/hygieneresources](http://www.wateraid.org/uk/hygieneresources)

## **What is Germ Zapper about?**

Germ Zapper is a tried and tested fun, educational and engaging game for children to learn about hygiene and the importance of washing our hands.

## Where can I find Germ Zapper?

The game is available to download through the App Store and Google Play, or you can play it online at [www.wateraidgames.org/playgermzapperonline](http://www.wateraidgames.org/playgermzapperonline)

## How do I play Germ Zapper with my child?

There are three stages to the game which can be played in any order over and over again. Below is a description of each game stage and some suggestions for how to draw out learning points during and after the game using questions. We have also provided some possible answers to help you. Remember to allow time for thought before you give them any answers.

## How long will it take to complete Germ Zapper?

Germ Zapper should take around 10 minutes per stage to complete. This could however be longer or shorter depending on how long you spend on the learning points for discussion.

We really hope that you enjoy playing Germ Zapper and get talking about health and hygiene at home and in places where people do not have access to clean water to wash their hands.

### 1. Find germs

In this stage children become germ detectives! Using their magnifying glass, they are challenged to search round different rooms in the house to find the hidden germs. Germs can be very difficult to find so look out for the clues onscreen to help along the way.

#### ***During the game:***

- Ask your child where they think there will be germs hidden and why.  
Explain that germs are everywhere and some places may have more germs than others. This could be because it is a place that lots of people may touch – door handles and taps for examples. Use these examples to help find more germs in the game.
- Ask your child how big they think germs are.  
Explain to your child that although we are looking for germs with a magnifying glass in the game, germs are in fact invisible to the naked eye. We simply cannot see them. For this reason, it is really important that we keep surfaces and ourselves, especially our hands, clean. You could go on to ask what instrument (not musical!) can help us see germs. Tell them that a microscope could be used to see germs. You could find images or videos of people using a microscope.

#### ***After the game:***

- Ask why our hands in particular need to be kept clean and why our hands could spread germs to more surfaces and other people.  
Explain that we use our hands to touch things, pick things up, carry things, eat and so on. We use our hands a lot and they come into contact with lots of things that could have germs on them, so it's important to keep them clean to stop germs spreading. Go on to ask what we need to do to keep our hands clean – wash them with soap and water.

- Ask what germs can do if they get inside our body and why we need to stop germs from spreading.

Explain that if germs gets inside our bodies, they can make us very sick. We could get a tummy ache or feel very unwell. If we don't wash our hands, we could spread these germs to other people making them feel unwell too.

## 2. Zap Germs

Zap Germs encourages children to use their hand eye coordination to zap away germs from hands before they touch food. Children have a set time limit to zap 10 germs.

### ***During the game:***

- Tell your child that the hands on the screen are covered in germs! It is their job to zap away the germs to prevent them from making the person ill. Ask your child what the hands look like they are about to do and how it could make them unwell.  
Explain that it looks like they are about to pick up a very tasty burger but because their hands are not clean, they may end up getting germs inside their bodies and feeling very unwell.

### ***After the game:***

- Ask your child to imagine that the hands in the game belong to their friend. What should they tell their friend to do before picking up the burger? Wash your hands!

## 3. Wash Your Hands

Wash your Hands is a great way to get children to think about the best way to wash their hands. By watching the animation and then doing the sequencing activity that follows, children will remember the different steps to washing their hands properly.

### ***During the game:***

- Watch the animation and ask what is happening in each part. Tell your child that they need to try and remember what happens and help them describe what they can see. They can copy the actions as they watch.

- After they watch the animation, they need to put each step of washing their hands into the right order. Encourage them to recall what they saw and mime the hand actions to help them. Watch the animation again if you need to.

**After the game:**

- Practice handwashing for real by remembering the steps that they saw in the animation and the game. Ask your child why it's important to wash between fingers and in the creases of our skin. Remind them that germs are tiny and so can get into the little areas we may not usually think about.
- Reward thorough handwashing by colouring in the water droplets on the handy chart provided every time your child washes their hands.
- Ask them when they should wash their hands and why. Explain that handwashing is particularly important before we eat and after we go to the toilet to stop germs from getting into our bodies or spread to other people which could make them ill.

**Further fun activities**

You've played the game, and found out how to keep your hands clean. But you still want to do more. Great! Here are some ideas.

- Create your own germ characters like the cartoon germs in the game. Draw them or make them with modelling dough or clay. Give them names and describe why they are bad. Create a soapy superhero to zap them away. You could even dress up as the super hero and imagine you are getting rid of the bad germ characters. Write a story or make up a play for friends and family to watch.
- Create a song to a familiar tune to help you remember how to wash your hands. Think of some handy actions to go with the words. For example, change the words to *happy birthday* which is around the correct length of twenty seconds needed to thoroughly wash our hands. You could even record it on a phone, tablet or computer to share amongst your family and friends to help them wash their hands properly too!
- Make signs and posters to remind people to wash their hands. Where will you put them and why? For example, the bathroom and kitchen.