

## **What are microbes?**

A microbe is a tiny living thing that is too small to be seen by the naked eye. Microbes are found all around us and live in soil, in water, in the air, and on the human body. Sometimes microbes are called microorganisms.

Some types of microorganisms or microbes can make us sick while others help to keep us healthy. The term microbe is used to describe anything too small to be seen. Common types of microbes are bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa.

### Bacteria

- Many different bacteria live in our bodies and help us stay healthy. Other bacteria cause us to get sick with a disease.
- A disease caused by bacteria can be treated with an antibiotic medicine.
- Many foods need bacteria to be produced such as yogurt or sauerkraut.

### Virus:

- Need to invade or get into our cells to reproduce and multiply.
- Can cause different health conditions such as diarrhea or colds. Antibiotics DO NOT work on viruses.
- The “flu” or influenza is caused by a virus as is the new disease COVID-19.
- To fight a virus, your body needs to develop immunity.

## Fungi:

- Live in many different environments.
- Examples are mushrooms, yeast, and mold.
- Some fungi live on the skin or in your body and are no problem, but other fungi cause disease. An example of a disease caused by fungi is athlete's foot.
- Some fungi have also helped us. Penicillin is a type of mold that is used to develop an antibiotic.