



# MICROBE PETS

## Modeling the Microscopic World

### TOPICS

Biology, Ecology, Health

### MATERIALS LIST

- Pom-Poms
- Wiggly eyes
- Glue
- Pipe cleaners
- Other craft decorations

### STANDARDS

Grades K–2 Engineering and Design  
ETS1-2

Grade 5 Life Sciences 2-1

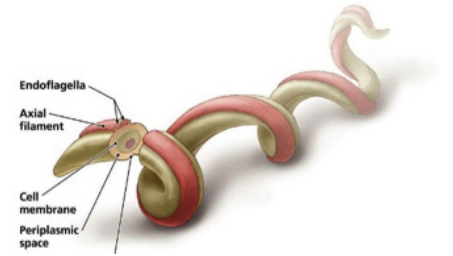
### WEB RESOURCES

[www.giantmicrobes.com](http://www.giantmicrobes.com) for more inspiration when building your own microbe pets.

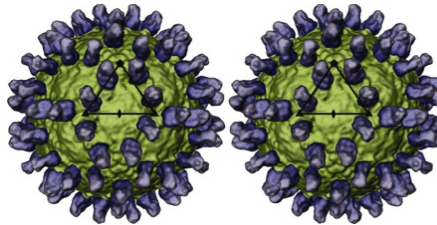
Inspired by Coral Clark (RAFT)



*Dog Heartworm*



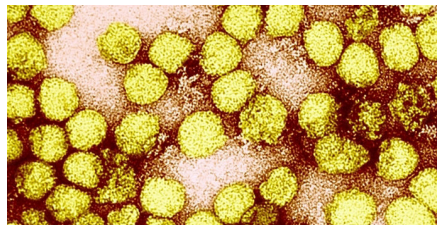
*Lyme Disease*



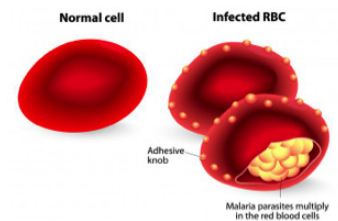
*West Nile*



*Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever*



*Yellow Fever*



*Malaria*

Microbes are everywhere! And good, bad, or otherwise, ecologists and science teachers should not ignore them. Teachers can use these microbe pets as a fun way of discussing a topic that can sometimes be a bit uncomfortable.

### TO DO AND NOTICE

1. Decide which microbe you wish to make, and gather appropriate pom-poms.
2. Glue the pom-poms together and allow them to dry.
3. Decorate with wiggly eyes or other accouterments.
4. Optional: Write a story or poem about the life of your "Microbe Pet". How long does it live? Where does it live? What is its life like? What does it do?

### THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE ACTIVITY

In terms of life on planet Earth, the microbes win! They were here first, they can survive in the harshest environments, and the bacterial biomass outweighs the animal biomass hands-down! Most microbes either help us or live in harmony with us, but some are harmful. We call the harmful ones "germs". Many microbes actually help humans, such as yeasts that we use to make bread and beer. And then there are the e.coli that live in our guts. There are more bacteria in the human colon than the number of people who have ever lived! Everyone has about 1kg of bacteria in their gut, and without them, we could not digest food properly.