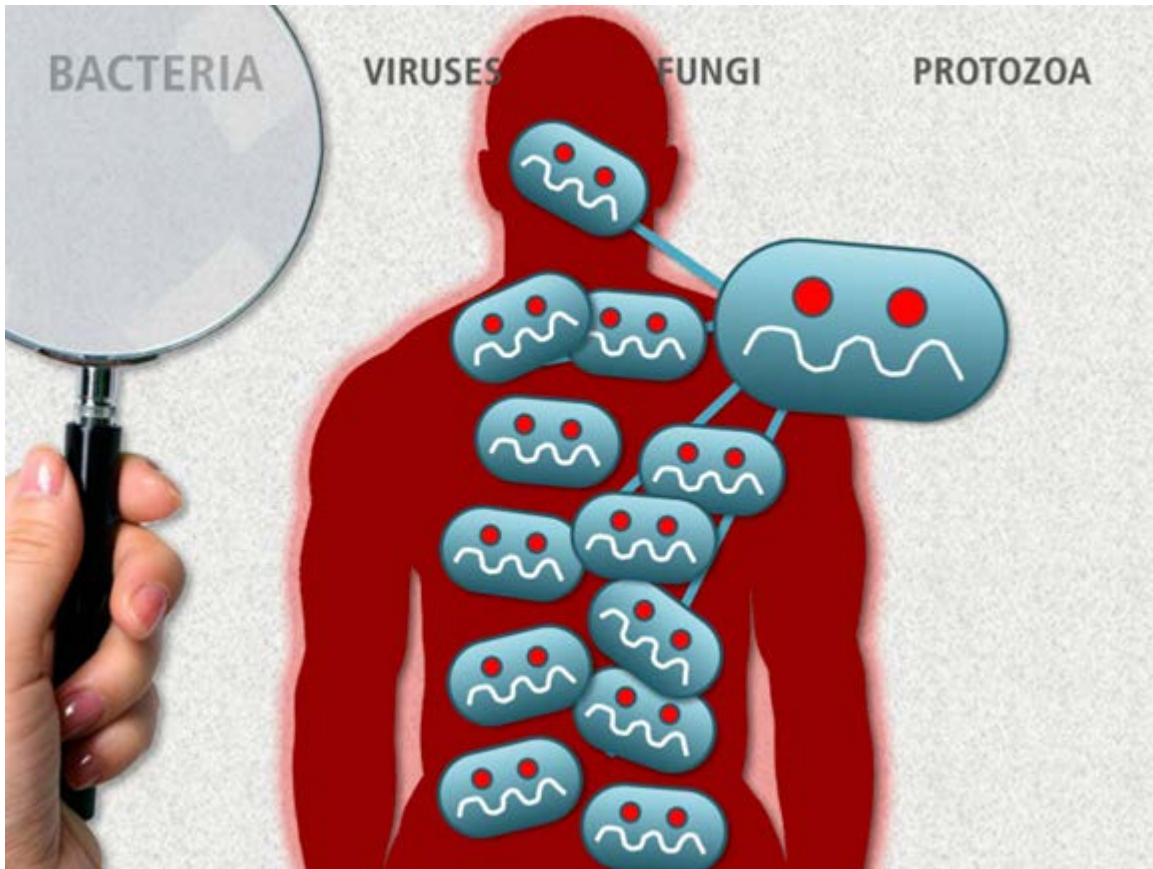


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Bacteria



Bacteria are small, one-celled organisms that live almost everywhere. They can even live on the surface of the computer you are using right now!

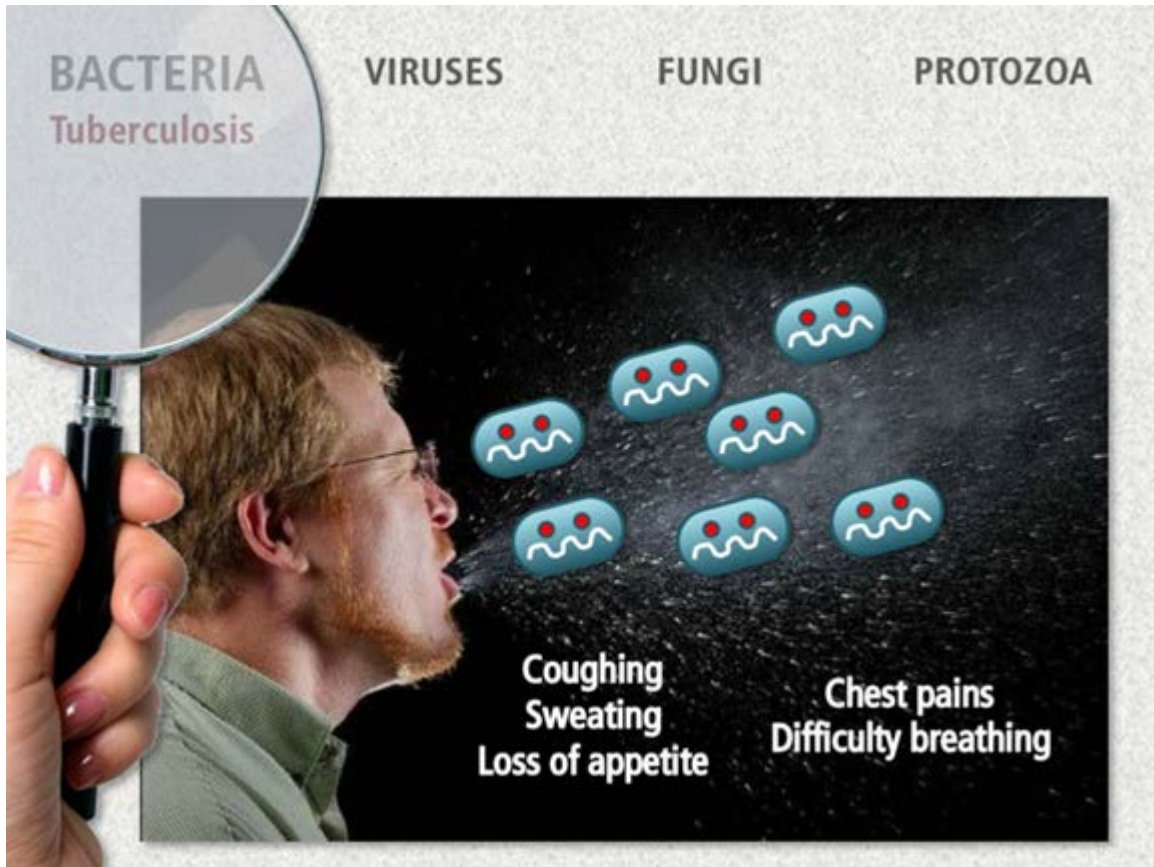
Some bacteria are good for your body and help out with digestion. Harmful bacteria are poisonous to your body.

Most of the bad bacteria in your body are counteracted by your immune system; however, pathogenic bacteria can cause serious infections in your respiratory and digestive systems. Bacteria enter the body and then begin to reproduce rapidly. If your immune system cannot handle the bacteria quickly and there are many of them, you can become sick.

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Tuberculosis

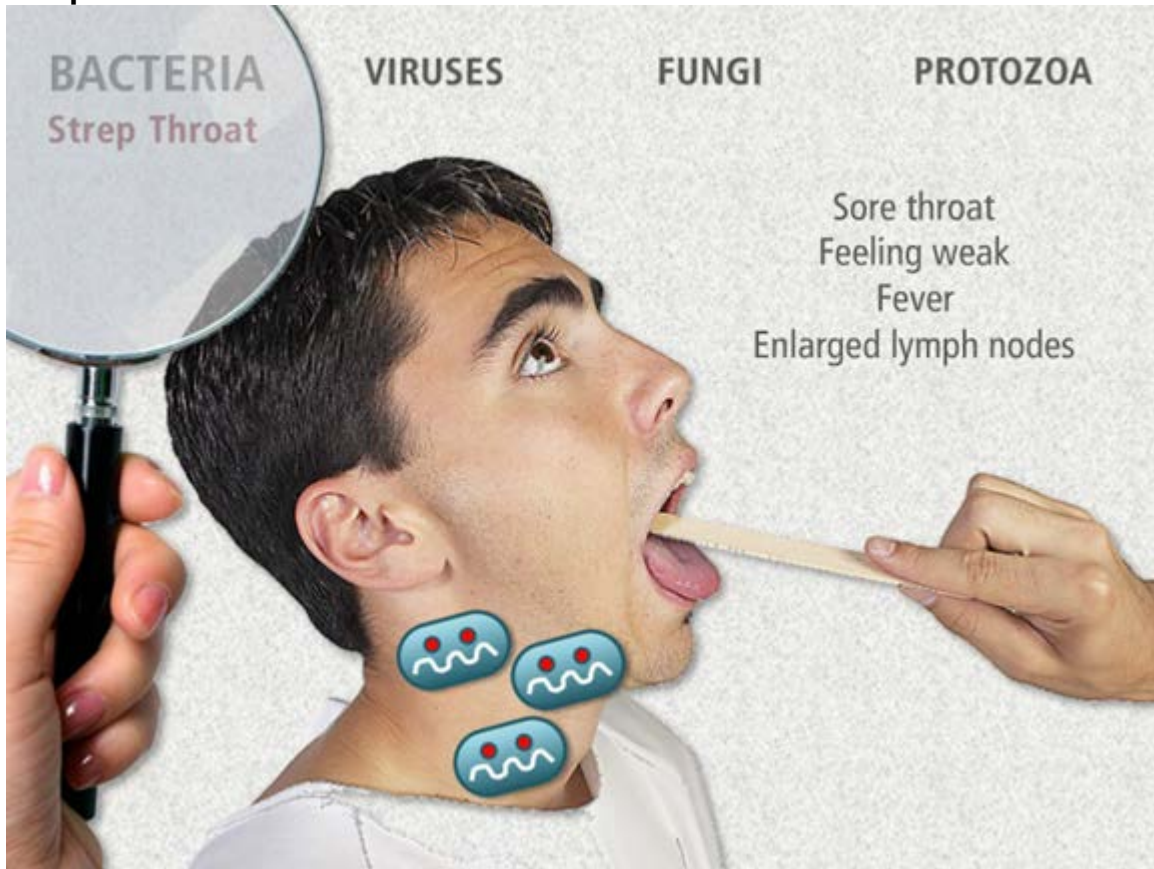


Tuberculosis is an extremely transmittable bacterial infection that affects the lungs. Tuberculosis, or TB, is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes and releases the bacteria into the air. Usually the body's immune system is able to stop the disease and healing occurs. If the body is not able to fend off TB, the infection spreads into the lymph nodes. It can also enter different parts of the body by traveling through the bloodstream. Symptoms of TB include coughing, sweating, loss of appetite, chest pains, and difficulty breathing. While tuberculosis can be resistant to treatment at times, the application of antibiotics can control and cure this infection.

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Strep Throat

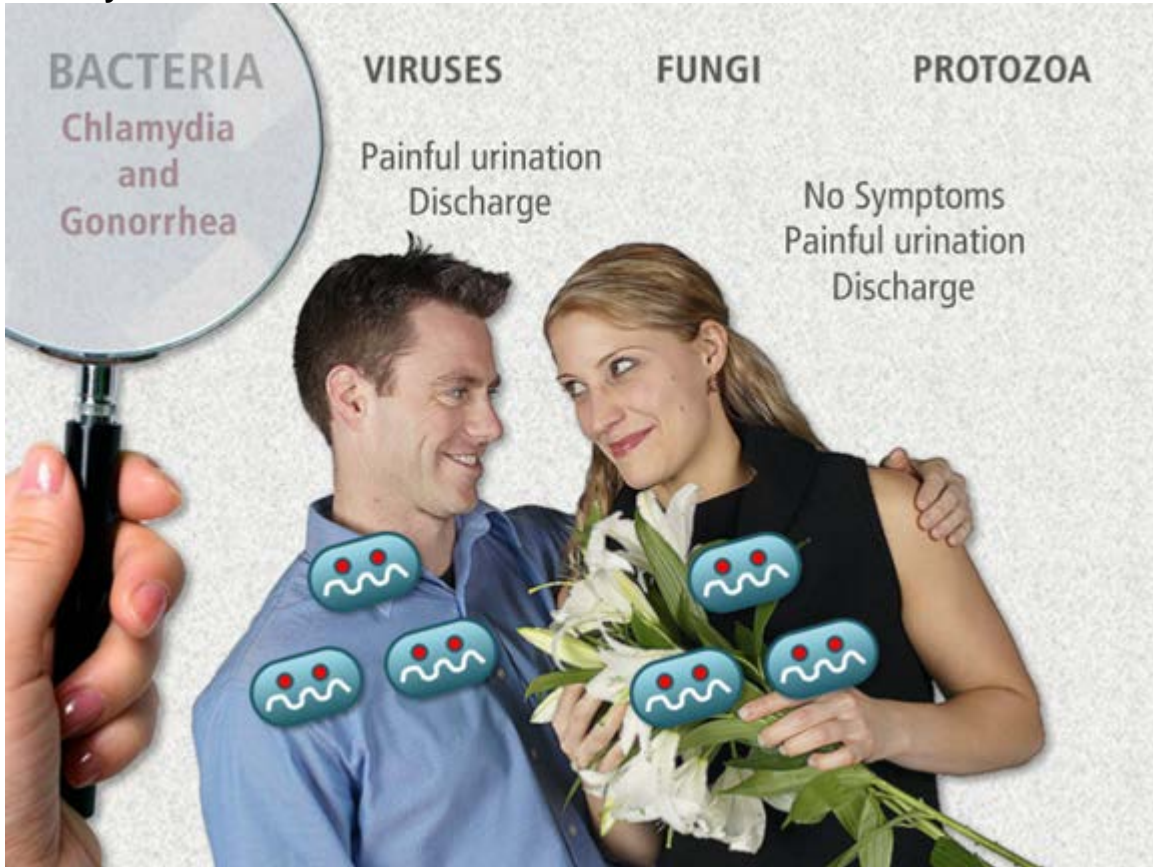


Strep throat is a bacterial infection that affects the throat. The disease is spread when an infected person coughs and releases the bacteria into the air. Symptoms of this infection are a sore throat, feeling weak, fever, and enlarged lymph nodes. If it is untreated, strep throat can produce serious complications. It is easily treated with a trip to the doctor and antibiotics.

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Chlamydia and Gonorrhea



Chlamydia and gonorrhea are sexually transmitted infections, STIs, that are caused by bacteria. These infections can infect both males and females. STIs are pathogens that are spread from person to person through sexual activity; however, you can become infected without having sexual intercourse. Both chlamydia and gonorrhea can be transmitted even when no symptoms are present.

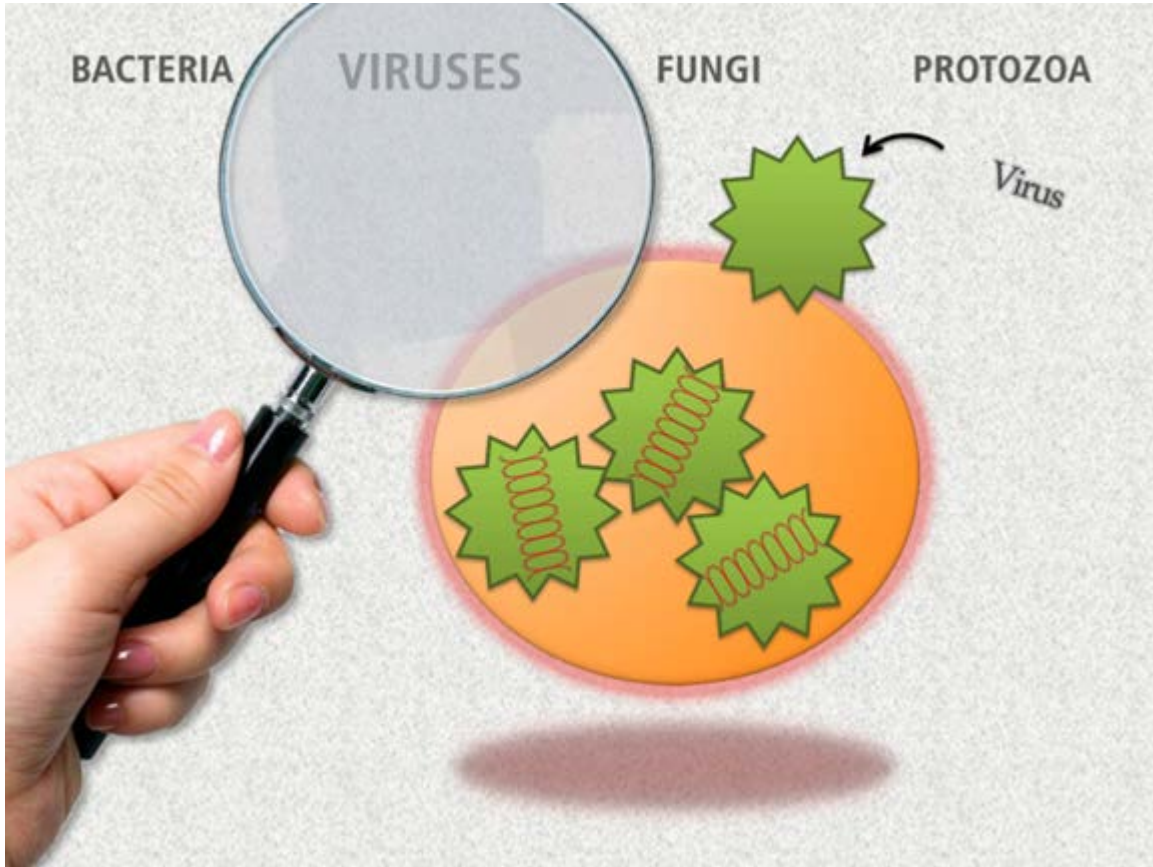
The symptoms for chlamydia and gonorrhea include painful urination and discharge from the penis in males; however, in females the symptoms usually go unnoticed. There may be an unusual discharge or pain for females, especially if infections go untreated.

Both chlamydia and gonorrhea can only be diagnosed by going to the doctor and getting tested. Antibiotics cure chlamydia and gonorrhea. Antibiotics will cure chlamydia and gonorrhea but, if these infections go untreated for a long period of time, scar tissue will form and there is a chance of infertility.

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Viruses

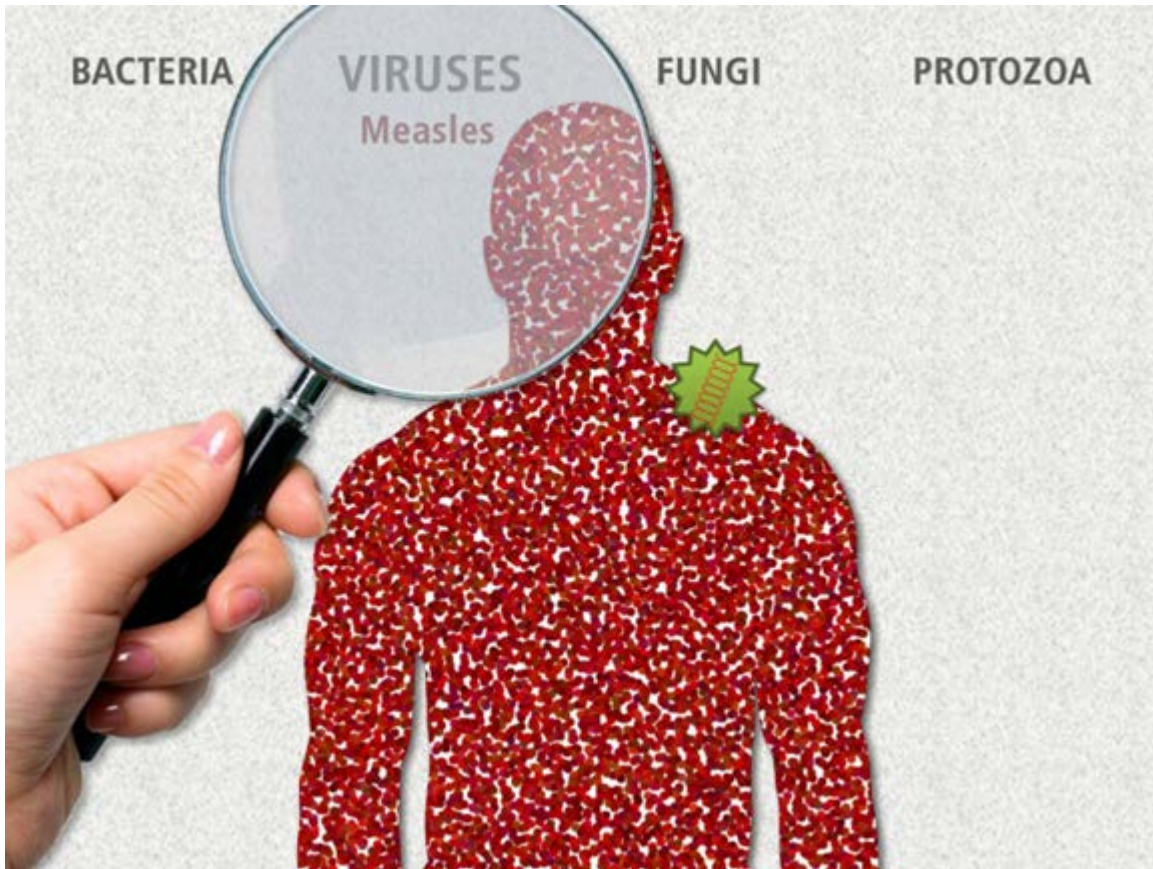


Viruses are much smaller than bacteria, and survive by replicating themselves in a host organism. Most viruses can only live on surfaces for a short period of time and need to be in a living organism to survive, reproduce, and grow. Viruses are made up of a cluster of genetic material that is injected into the cells of their host to produce a new virus. Although they are the smallest of the pathogens, they can be extremely dangerous. Viruses usually run their course and then are destroyed by the immune system.

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Measles

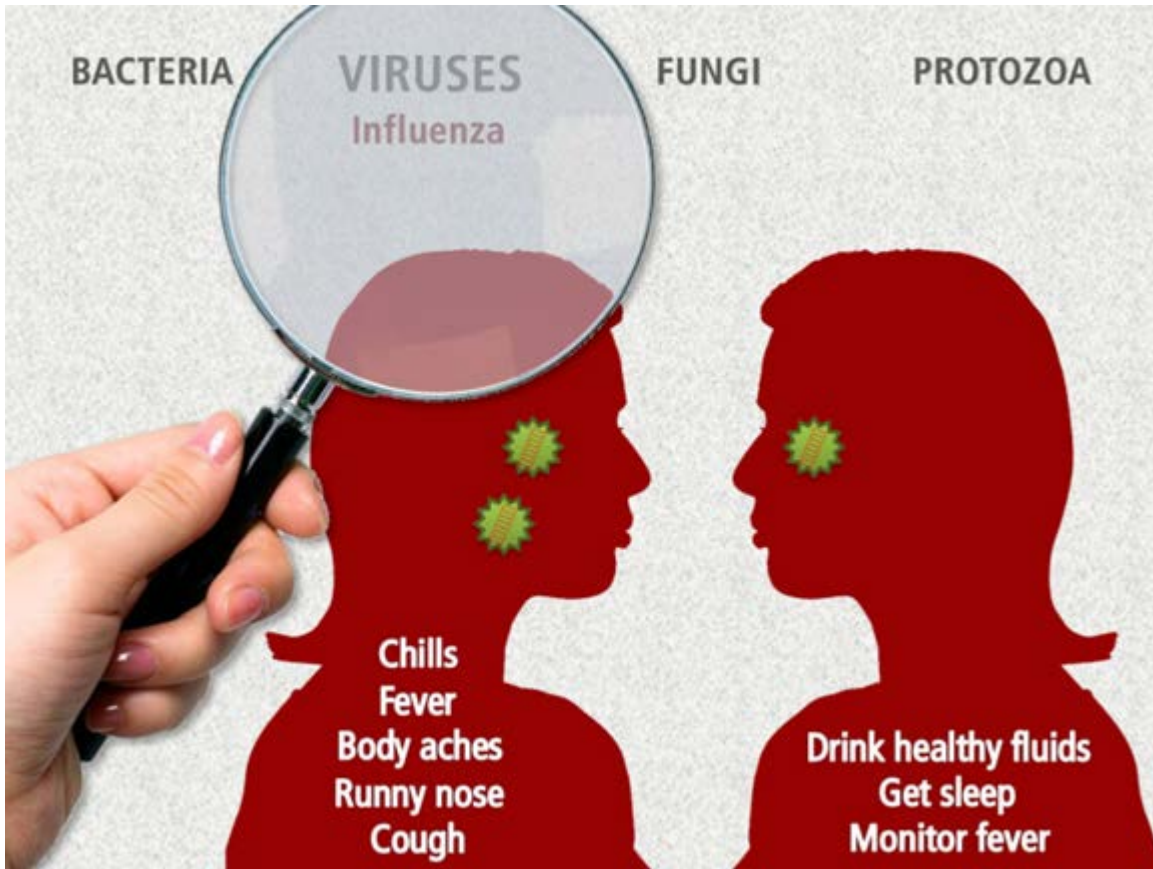


Measles is a virus that is highly contagious. Although immunizations have mostly eliminated this disease, it is still known to occur. The illness starts with a fever and then develops into a rash. Ear and chest infections can be complications of measles.

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Influenza

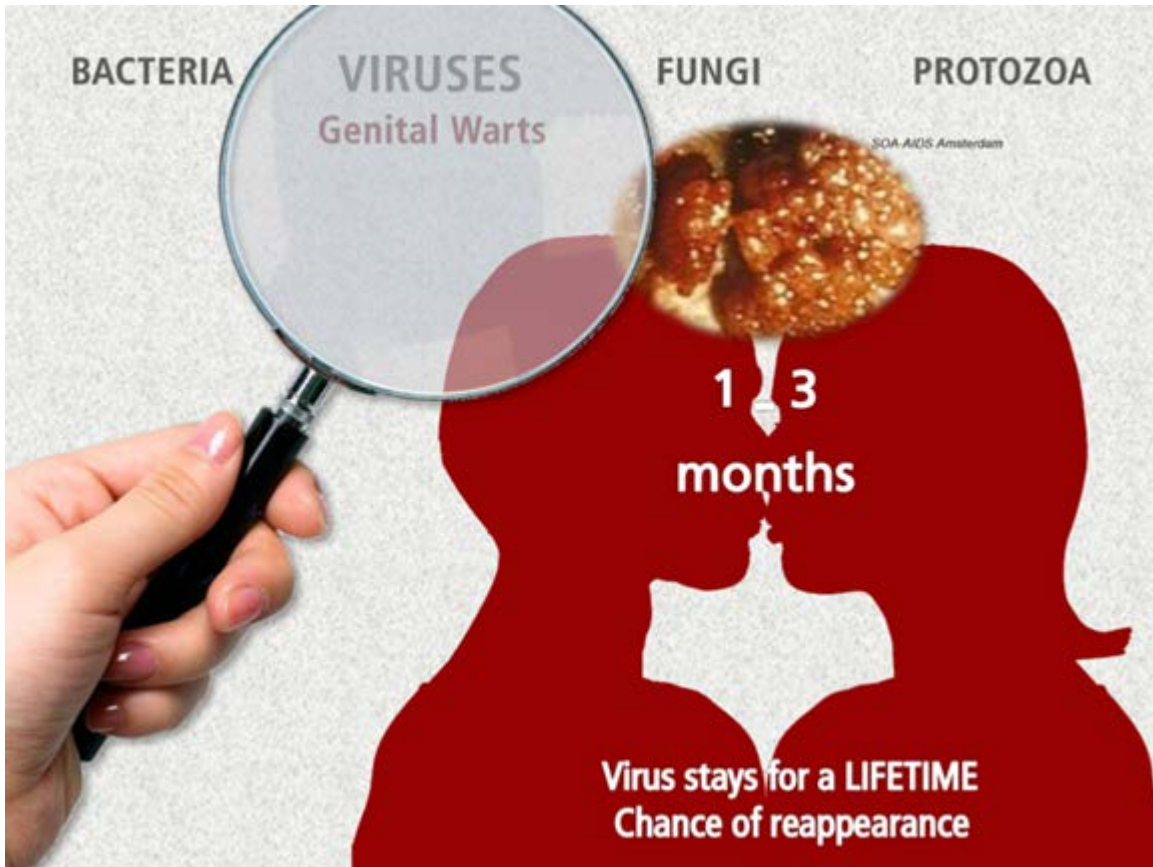


Influenza is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory system. Also known as “the flu,” it has symptoms ranging from chills, fever, and body aches to a runny nose and coughing. When a person with the flu coughs or sneezes, the virus becomes airborne and can be inhaled by anyone nearby. There are vaccines that help to prevent some strands of the virus, but once you notice flu symptoms, you are beyond the point of prevention. To treat flu symptoms, drink lots of healthy fluids, get plenty of sleep, and keep track of your fever. If a fever continues for more than two days, it is recommended that you see a physician.

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Genital Warts

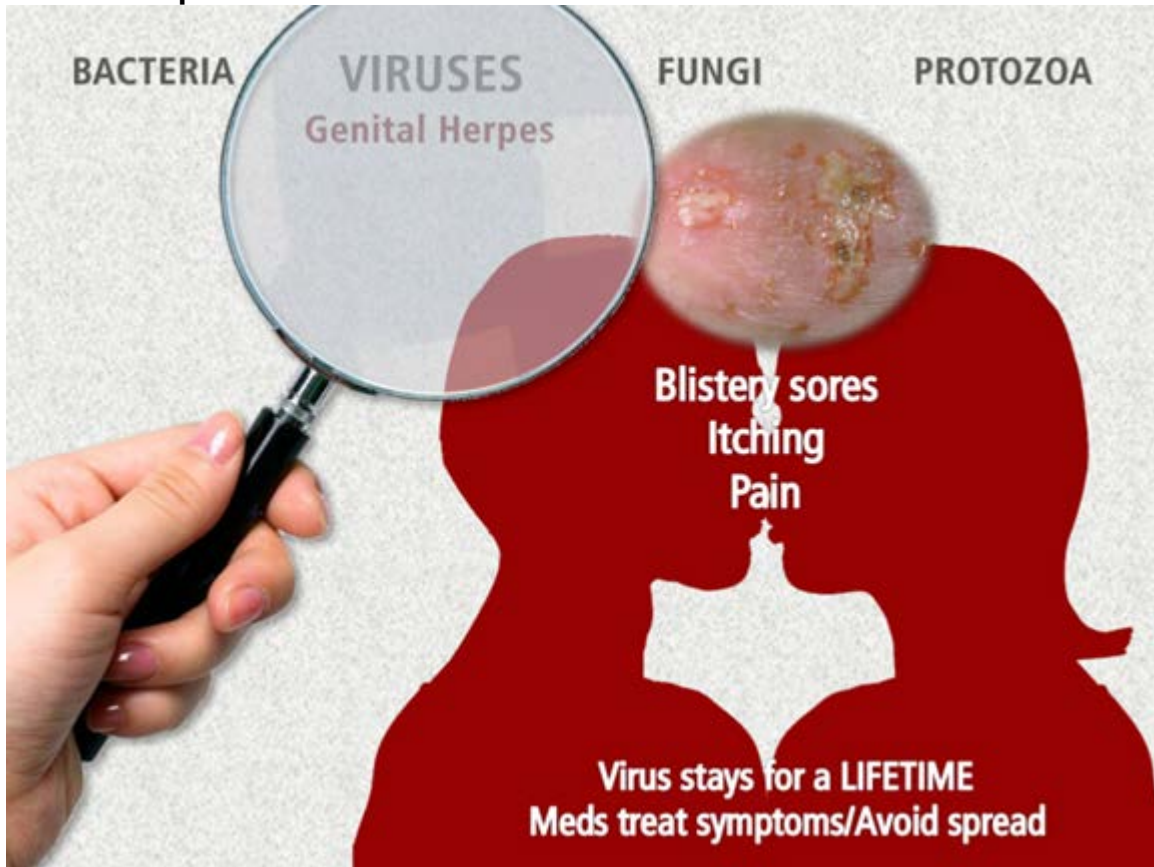


Genital warts are sexually transmitted infections that are caused by the human papillomavirus, HPV. They look like small, pink cauliflower tops and appear on the genitals. Once a person is infected, the warts appear one to three months after they have been exposed to the virus. A person with genital warts has the virus for the rest of his or her life. A physician can remove warts, but there is a chance of reappearance.

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Genital Herpes

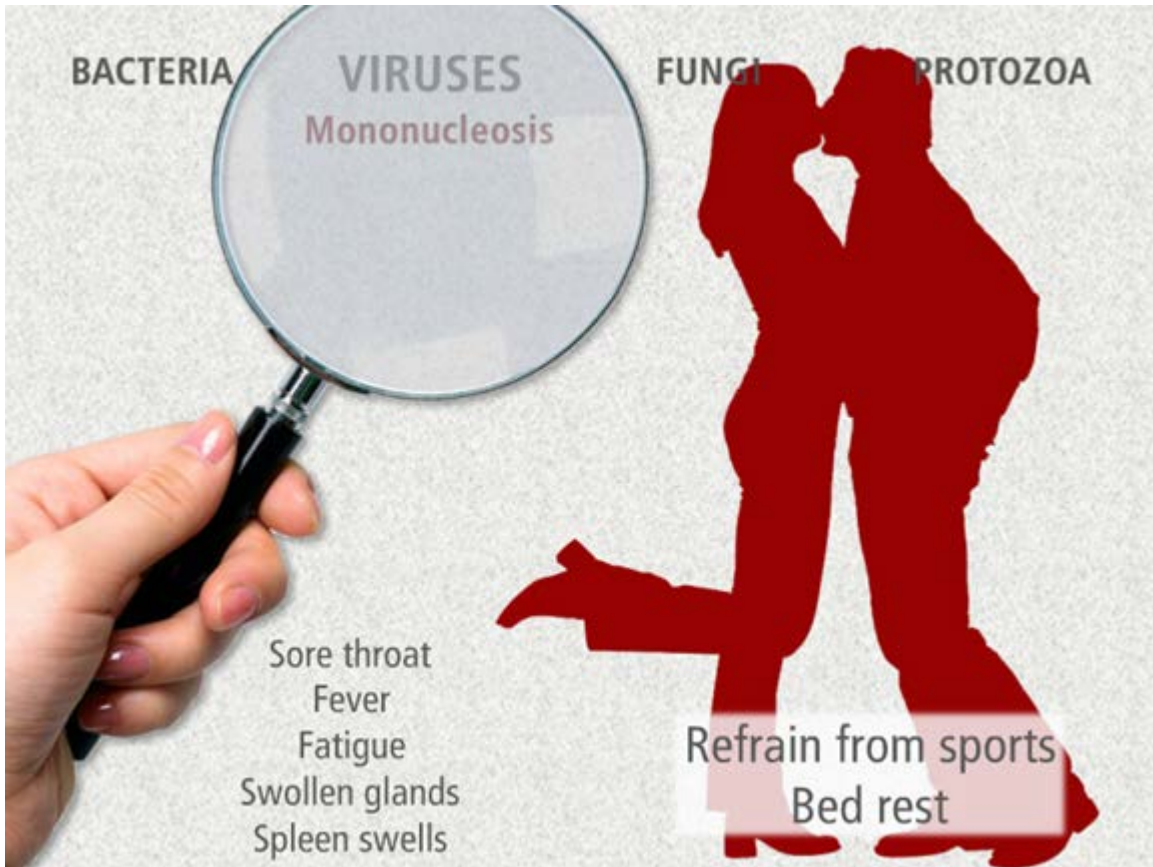


Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the herpes simplex type-two virus, HSV. Herpes emerges as blistery sores in the genital area and can be preceded by itching and pain a few hours or days before the blister outbreak. A person with genital herpes will have the virus for the rest of his or her life. Medications can be used to treat the symptoms and help avoid spreading genital herpes. Genital warts and genital herpes both need to be diagnosed by a physician.

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Mononucleosis

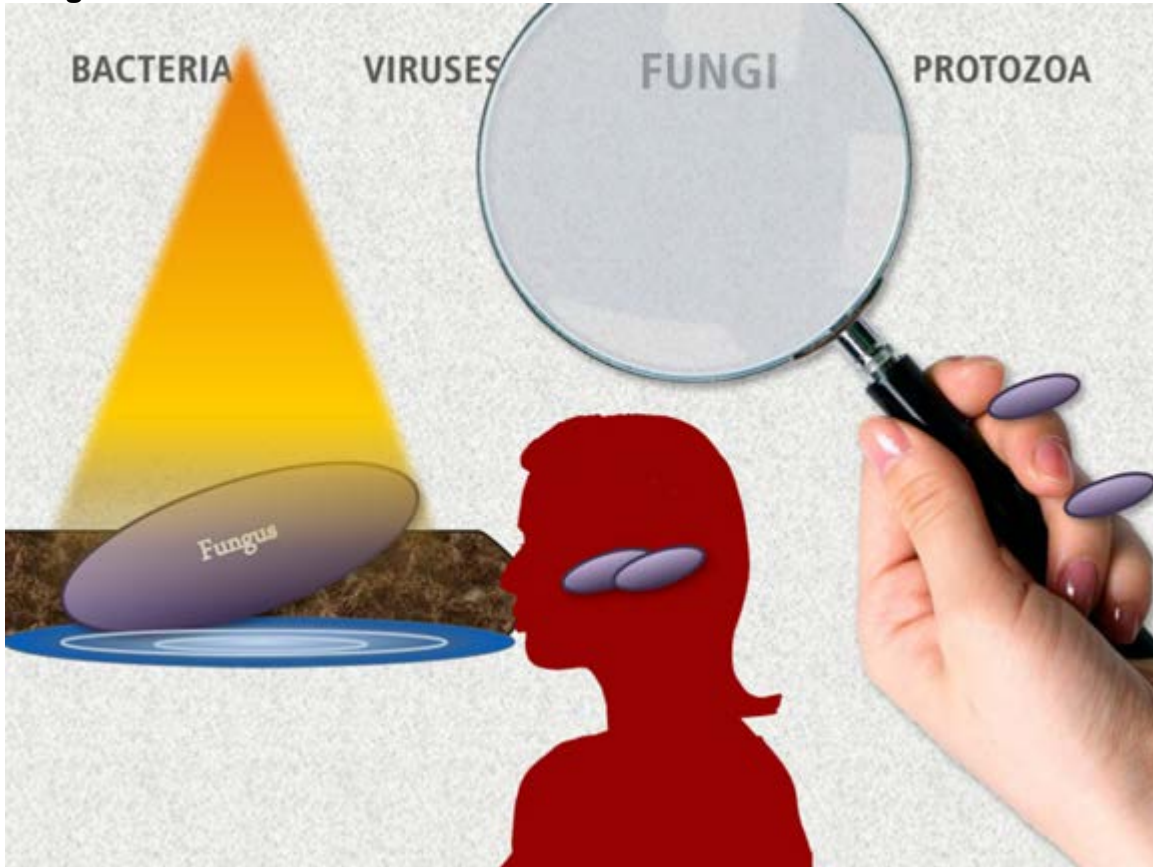


A viral infection that is very common among teenagers is mononucleosis, or mono. Sore throat, fever, fatigue, and swollen glands are symptoms of mono. Close contact and the transfer of saliva from an infected person spread the infection. Because of the way it is spread, it is sometimes referred to as the "Kissing Disease;" however, any type of action that transfers saliva can cause mono. When a person is infected with mono, the spleen swells. Until the disease is treated and the person is fully recovered, they should refrain from participating in contact sports so that the spleen will not rupture. Bed rest is the recommended treatment for mono and can be required for up to six weeks.

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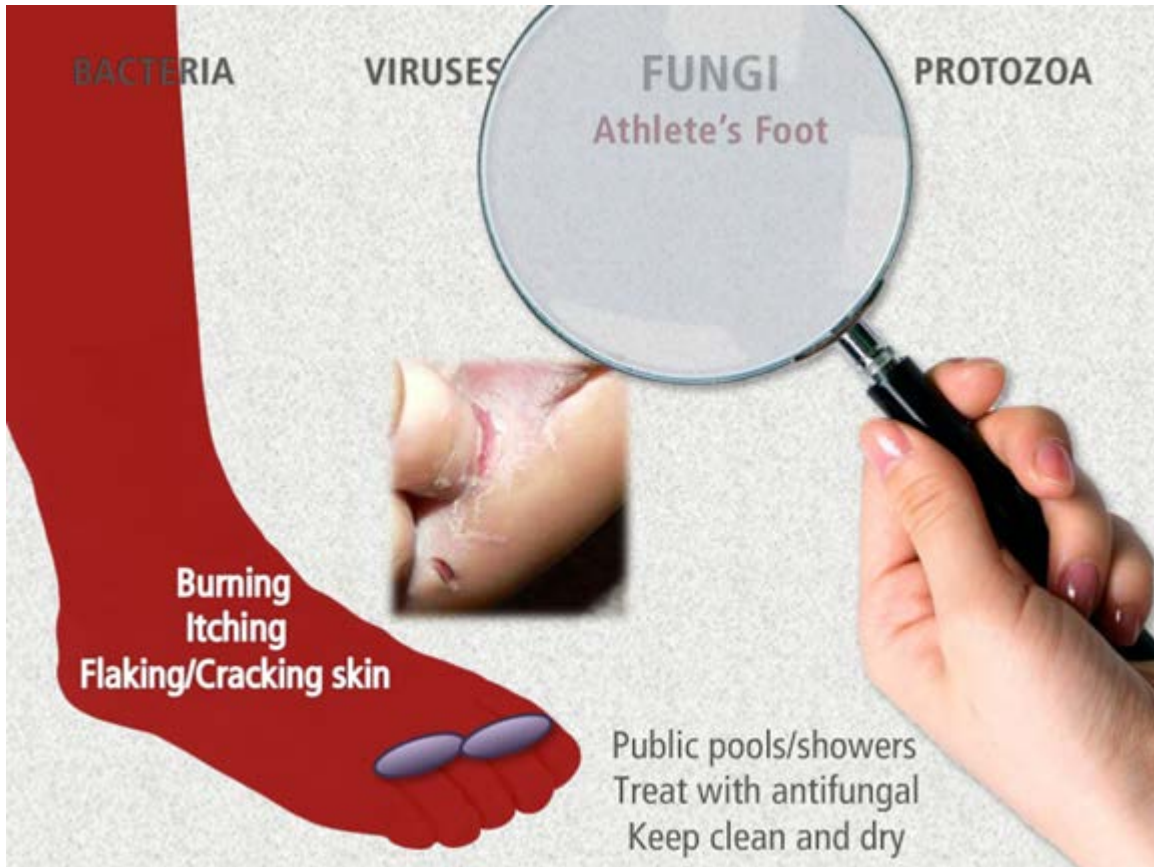
Fungi



Communicable diseases can also be caused by a fungus. Fungi (plural for fungus) are plant-like organisms that obtain nutrition from other plants and animals. They live in the air and soil, on animals, plants, and humans, and especially like warm, damp environments. Fungi cannot move independently; therefore, reproduction takes place when fungi spread tiny spores in the air. These spores can land on the skin or be inhaled by humans and animals. While most fungi are not considered dangerous, some cause irritating infections.

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Athlete's Foot



Athlete's foot is a condition that usually affects the feet, area between toes, and toenails; however, this condition can spread to your palms, underarms, and groin. Symptoms of athlete's foot include burning and itching. Skin may also crack and flake off, making the areas very tender and sore. Athlete's foot thrives in warm damp areas and is usually spread through public pools and showers. Athlete's foot is treated using an antifungal cream or spray and by keeping feet clean and dry.

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Ringworm

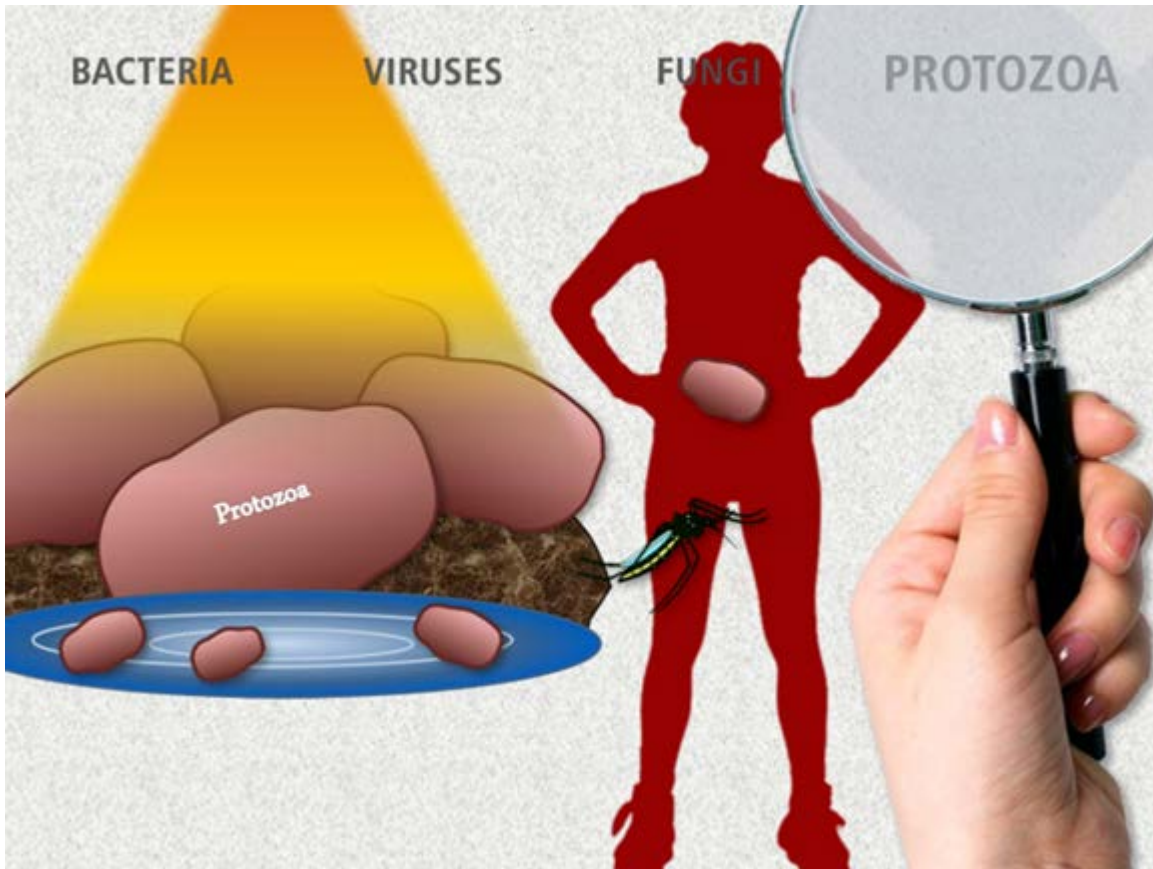


Ringworm is a fungus that causes small sores that begin to form in a series of rings that affect the skin, scalp, and nails. The infection causes skin to become sore and itchy. When ringworm affects the scalp, hair breaks off and falls out. To prevent ringworm infection, wear shoes in public showers, take a shower and wash off after contact sports, and wash your hands after touching pets. Ringworm on the skin can be treated with a cream. Ringworm on the scalp or nails needs to be treated with an antifungal medication. See a doctor if you suspect you have ringworm so that he or she can recommend the best treatment for you.

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Protozoa



Protozoa are similar to bacteria in that they are one-celled organisms. Most protozoa are harmless, but some types cause diseases in humans. They like tropical locations and live in water and soil. Protozoa frequently spread disease through contaminated water and often cause intestinal infections. They can also be spread by insect bites.

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Malaria



Malaria is a parasite that is transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. Malaria destroys red blood cells and causes anemia. This infection is most prevalent in tropical areas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that around one million people die from malaria each year. This is something to keep in mind if you plan to travel to warmer climates. Many people who live in areas where malaria is found develop some immunity, but visitors do not have this immunity. Taking preventative medication before traveling can help fend off the infection.