



ACTIVITY #10: VACCINE MEMORY GAME

What you will need:

- An adult will act as a facilitator for this activity.
- Adults: Without showing the children what they are, collect 5-15 objects from around the house in a tray/on the bench, and cover them with a tea towel. A greater number of objects will increase the difficulty of the activity – vary the number of objects according to the child’s age. If you would like to use ‘vaccine themed’ items, see some examples below.
- A pencil and a piece of paper for each child, if appropriate (this game can also be done via verbal recall).
- Timer

Vaccine themed objects:

- A toy cow – the first vaccines were developed against cowpox. In fact, the word ‘vaccine’ comes from the scientific name for cowpox ‘*vaccinia*’
- A toy superhero, or some toy soldiers – when you get your vaccines, your immune system acts like a superhero or an army to fight off the pathogens
- A ‘code’ themed item/book – vaccines can help our immune cells make the ‘code’ they need to recognise a pathogen
- A vaccine record book
- A toy health care professional (nurse, doctor, scientist, etc.)
- Any of the characters you’ve created at home for Day of Immunology!





Instructions:

Adult script: 'This game is a test of your memory. Under this tea towel are X number of objects. In a moment, I'll lift the tea towel and you'll have X seconds/minutes to memorise them before I cover them back up. Then you'll write down/tell me what you remember seeing'

(To increase the difficulty, you can start this activity by having the children guess what is under the cloth without looking at all. This is like having no vaccine at all.)

1. In the first round, give the children a very short time to see the objects (short enough to not get them all the first time).
2. Repeat the activity and compare their answers. You can repeat it a third time if suitable.

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Explanation of the activity:

Each time your immune cells 'see' a vaccine, they're training to recognise and fight off a harmful pathogen, such as a bacteria or a virus. Vaccines are like a sneak preview of a specific pathogen; they contain harmless elements of the pathogen that will help the body to recognise it and produce antibodies and memory. If your immune cells have never seen a pathogen (or you didn't see what was under the tea towel), they don't really know what to expect. The first time you saw the objects you probably couldn't remember them all. The second time, your memory kicked in and more could be remembered. That's why we have booster vaccines too - the more times your immune system can 'see' a vaccine, the more quickly it will be able to recognise and respond to the pathogen by using memory.