

Simplified Speech #022 – Germs!

Episode description

Many Canadians tend to get sick in winter. In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Morag explain germs and how to avoid getting sick. Join them and laugh along as they talk about hand sanitizer and germophobes!

Fun fact

Germs are impossible to avoid. Did you know that there are more bacteria on most smartphones than on public toilets? The average smartphone screen has 18 times more bacteria than a public restroom, and even worse, the average office desk has 400 times more bacteria!

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To get over [something]
- To suck
- A germophobe
- To give [someone] a dirty look
- A repellant/repellant





Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey everybody. My name's Andrew.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And we are back with another Culips episode.

Morag, what's up? How are you these days?

Morag: I'm not doing too badly. I actually just **got over a pretty nasty flu**.

Andrew: I heard about that. I also just **got over a pretty nasty flu**. Man! It **sucks** to be us.

Morag: Right? I think it's the season, though. I believe we even call this flu season.

Andrew: Flu season, yeah.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: How long were you sick for?

Morag: Really bad—4 days. All in all, a bit over a week.

Andrew: A week? Ugh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Morag: How about you?

Andrew: Well, I have a funny story about visiting the doctor.

Morag: Hmm.

Andrew: Because as many of you know, I'm currently living in South Korea. So going to the doctor in a foreign country is always ... Well, it can be a unique experience. So I went to the doctor, and the doctor said, "You've got a severe case of the flu. You need to get a shot, and the shot will make you feel better right away."

And I was obviously down to feel better right away, so I agreed to the shot. So the nurse takes me to a room, and I'm getting ready for the shot by rolling up my sleeve because in Canada we always get a shot in the arm.



- Andrew: But in Korea, they give you a shot in the butt. So the nurse was like, "What are you doing rolling up your sleeve? You should be taking off your pants." I said, "Whoa! Hello, nurse."
- Morag: OK.
- Andrew: OK. So I received the shot. And it's true; I don't know what is in the shot, but I felt better almost immediately. So I was really only sick for a couple of days.
- Morag: Man, even though you had to get that shot in the butt, I am envious.
- Andrew: Well, I'm glad in the end we're both feeling better and can be with all of our listeners here today. Speaking of which, today, we're going to do a Simplified Speech episode. Which is where we have a natural conversation, but we speak slower than we do in our everyday lives.
- And because Morag and I were both sick recently, we're going to talk today about germs.
- Morag: Ooh.
- Andrew: Germs. And we'll get started with our conversation right after this message.
- Announcer: Do you like listening to Culips? If so, please show your support by leaving Culips a five-star rating and a review on iTunes or Stitcher. This helps new listeners find the show. So don't delay. Rate and review today.
- Andrew: We're back. And Morag, my first question for you is what are germs?
- Morag: Well Andrew, germs is a term that we use to mean a couple of different things. And those are bacteria and viruses. So two different things that can make you sick.
- Andrew: Yes, bacteria and viruses. Those nasty little things that can make you sick and that you can often catch from other people.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And I don't know about you, but I'm a little paranoid about germs.
- Morag: Yeah?
- Andrew: In fact, right in front of me sitting on my desk is a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- Morag: Hmm, don't do it.

Andrew: I know, I know. You're not supposed to use it. And honestly, it didn't do a very good job of keeping me healthy this flu season, so maybe I need to get rid of it. But I'm just paranoid about germs.

Morag: The one thing that makes me sure that hand sanitizers and things that kill all germs, that those things, are bad is that the flu shot that you get to prevent the flu actually has a small portion of the flu virus within it. What that means is that your body needs to recognize these germs in order to build its defenses and stop you from getting sick. It needs to know what those germs are.

If you come into contact with a germ that your body has never imagined before, that's when you get really sick.

Andrew: I know, I know. You are absolutely right.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: But I still have this habit of sanitizing my hands to avoid getting sick.

Morag: There are a lot of people who avoid certain things to try and decrease the germs that they're in contact with. I guess I just can thank one of my grandmothers, who said, "You have to eat a pound of dirt before you die." And so there's just a general feeling that, you know, dirtiness is OK, a little bit.

Andrew: How much dirt have you had so far?

Morag: Oh, I wish I knew.

Andrew: Morag, I've got a question for you.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Do you ever avoid certain places so that you can stay away from germs?

Morag: Yes, yes, a 100 percent. I avoid schools.

Andrew: Schools. Elementary schools?

Morag: Any schools. Universities, anywhere where you have a large concentration of similarly aged people.

Andrew: Yes, those places are filled with germs, and it's very easy to catch an illness when ...

Morag: Mmhmm.



- Andrew: You're around so many other people.
- Morag: I always got sick a couple of times a year when I was in university. And now, even though I actually do some work in a bar—touching money, touching people's glasses and foodstuff—I don't get sick as much, except for that terrible flu, but yeah.
- Andrew: I was in a very crowded elevator the other day and somebody got on and just started coughing like crazy.
- Morag: Hmm.
- Andrew: So in this situation, you know what I do?
- Morag: Cover your mouth?
- Andrew: I hold my breath.
- Morag: Ah.
- Andrew: Until I get out of the elevator. But the problem was we were like on the 15th floor ...
- Morag: Ooh.
- Andrew: And we had to make many stops all the way down. So it was a difficult thing to hold my breath for that long of a time, but I did it!
- Morag: Wow! Good for you. That wouldn't have worked for me in a situation that I was in recently, another place where you can't really avoid germs. And that's an airplane.
- Andrew: An airplane, yes.
- Morag: Because you have circulated or recycled air, there's no new air coming in for hours. So if someone is coughing or sick, well, there's nothing you can do. But unfortunately, I couldn't hold my breath for five and a half hours.
- Andrew: No, that is a little unreasonable to expect of you.
- Morag: Yeah. Well, I would no longer be me if I managed that.
- Andrew: Being sick would be the least of your concerns at that point.
- Morag: Exactly, yeah.



- Andrew: Now, I mentioned early that I was a little bit paranoid about germs. But we have a very interesting expression to describe somebody who is very, very afraid of germs.
- Morag: I think I know which one you're talking about.
- Andrew: Well, if you guessed **germophobe** ...
- Morag: Whoohoo!
- Andrew: You'd be correct.
- Morag: All right!
- Andrew: So **a germophobe** is somebody who just hates germs and constantly washes their hands, cleans things, avoids areas where there are germs.
- Morag: **Gives people dirty looks** when they cough.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Morag: Stuff like that.
- Andrew: Have you ever met **a germophobe** before, Morag?
- Morag: Yes, I definitely have. But I'm a bit messy. And yeah, so they don't tend to like me.
- Andrew: You're **a germophobe repellant**.
- Morag: Yeah. I mean, I keep everything very clean but ... Does messy and clean make sense?
- Andrew: You can be messy and clean at the same time ...
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Absolutely.
- Morag: But it doesn't look perfect, especially to **a germophobe**. They're usually uncomfortable in areas that look like they could be dirty or filled with germs.
- Andrew: Yes. I could see **a germophobe** wanting to avoid that type of place, so ...
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Good job, Morag.



Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: Of keeping those **germophobes** away.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: And that is all the time we have for today. And I'm curious about what you think. Are you **a germophobe**? Do you do anything special to avoid getting sick? Send us a message and let us know. You can send us any questions or comments through our Facebook page, facebook.com/culipspodcast, or you can even email me directly at andrew@culips.com.

Morag: And remember, everyone, if your goal is to improve your English, we really want to help you. The best way to study with us is to become a Culips member because membership gets you access to our learning materials, which include transcripts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for each and every episode.

So visit our website, Culips.com, to learn how to become a member. Thanks for listening, everyone. We will be back soon with another Culips episode.

Andrew: Bye.

Morag: Bye!

Announcer: Have you signed up for the Culips newsletter? You can receive updates on all the latest episodes, tips about learning English, and special Culips offers delivered directly to your inbox for free. To join, just visit Culips.com and enter your email address at the bottom of the page.

Detailed Explanations

To get over [something]

The expression **to get over [something]** has three related meanings: to deal with something, to recover from something, and to accept something.

First, **to get over [something]** can mean to deal with, conquer, or gain control of something. This meaning of **to get over [something]** is often used to talk about someone overcoming a fear. For example, if someone is afraid of heights, and they climbed a mountain despite having this fear, you could say, "They **got over their fear of heights** and climbed the mountain."

Second, **to get over [something]** can mean to get better or to recover from something, usually an illness or an injury. For example, if you were sick with the flu and now you feel healthy again, you could say, "I **got over the flu**."

Third, **to get over [something]** can mean to accept an unpleasant situation. This meaning can be used to talk about accepting any kind of bad situation. For example, if you and your partner break up, you will feel awful. However, after some time has passed, you will feel better again. This process of moving from feeling bad to feeling normal is called **getting over the breakup**.

Here are a few more examples with **to get over [something]**:

Hannah:	Guess what! I finally tried ketchup yesterday!
Paul:	Wow, good for you! You finally got over your weird aversion to a harmless, delicious condiment.

Sharon:	Is Neil still sick?
Jesse:	Yeah, he is. I hope he gets over it soon. He's been sick for 2 weeks now.

Rick:	How was your weekend?
Maggie:	Terrible. I had to put my cat down. My house just doesn't feel the same anymore.
Rick:	I'm sorry. Death is hard. Getting a new cat might help you get over it .

To suck

Saying that something **sucks** is an informal, slangy way of saying that something is bad. Using this meaning of **to suck** can be considered rude, so it should be avoided in professional or polite situations.

However, **to suck** can also be used as a sympathetic response to something someone else has said. For example, if someone told you a story about the terrible weekend they had, you could say, "Oh, that **sucks!**" If something is very bad or of poor quality, you could also say that it **sucks**. For example, if you don't like your phone, you could say, "The phone **sucks**." So **to suck** can be used to describe situations, people, or things that are unpleasant or disagreeable.

Here are a couple more examples with **to suck**:

Hugh:	How do you like your new job?
Lorna:	Oh man, I'm so exhausted. It's way more work than I thought it would be!
Hugh:	That sucks! Maybe it'll get better when you're more used to the job.

Jake:	Do you want to go grab dinner soon?
Katie:	I can't leave for another hour. I'm doing laundry right now, and my dryer sucks . It takes 2 hours to dry a load of laundry!

A germophobe

A germophobe means a person who is extremely afraid of coming into contact with germs. **Germophobes** usually avoid public bathrooms, often use hand sanitizer, and obsessively clean.

So if someone goes out of their way to avoid germs or is abnormally scared of germs, you can call them **a germophobe**.

Here's one more example with **a germophobe**:

Liz:	Do you think that Lucas would look after our cat while we're away?
Colin:	No way, not Lucas. He's a total germophobe . He would freak out if the cat left fur on his couch or tracked kitty litter on his floor.

To give [someone] a dirty look

A **dirty look** means a facial expression of distaste, dislike, or disapproval. So **to give [someone] a dirty look** means to gaze at someone with a facial expression of distaste, dislike, or disapproval. So if you look at someone in a way that expresses negative feelings about them or their actions, you're **giving them a dirty look**.

For example, in this episode, Morag says that **germophobes** will **give people who cough dirty looks**. In other words, **germophobes** will make a disapproving or disgusted facial expression at people after they cough.

Therefore, the expression **to give [someone] a dirty look** means to look at someone with a facial expression of annoyance, disgust, or animosity.

Here are a couple more examples with **to give [someone] a dirty look**:

Spencer:	I just had a horrible ride home.
Christine:	What happened?
Spencer:	I was riding the metro, minding my own business, when all of a sudden this terrible smell fills the air. It was awful!
Christine:	That's gross, but people fart on the metro all the time.
Spencer:	It gets worse. Everyone thought that I was the one responsible for the awful smell. A bunch of people turned around and started giving me dirty looks . This one lady looked completely disgusted with me. I had no idea what to do. It was really uncomfortable.
Christine:	I'm so sorry, honey. That really sucks .

Josh:	What do you think of this outfit? OK, you're giving me a dirty look . Does that mean that I should change?
Nicole:	We're going to dinner with my parents, not hanging out at the beach. Take off those shorts and put on some pants! I can't believe you.
Josh:	Jeez, I'm sorry. I'll get changed!

A repellent/repellant

The noun **a repellent** is used to describe a substance that keeps something away. For example, in the summer, people use mosquito **repellents** to keep mosquitos from biting them.

When used as an adjective, **repellant** means to be resistant to something or to be disgusted or sickened by something.

So **repellant** can be used to describe or to express that something (eg, a substance) is resistant or impervious to something else. For example, if a coat is advertised as water-**repellant**, then the coat is waterproof. The coat doesn't allow water to soak into it.

Repellant can also be used to describe or express that something or someone is offensive. For example, bad smells, like the smell of garbage, are **repellant**. In other words, things that smell bad cause you to feel disgust or revolt. Anything that causes a strong negative reaction of dislike and the desire for distance can be described as **repellant**.

Here are a couple more examples with **a repellent/repellant**:

Allison:	Could you invite my little brother with you the next time you hang out with the guys?
Dylan:	John? No way! That kid is a repellent for girls. Going out won't be any fun with him around.
Allison:	Don't be mean.

Monica:	How was your date?
Stewart:	Terrible.
Monica:	That sucks ! What was so bad about it? I thought you were really excited about it.
Stewart:	I was, but once we got to talking over dinner, I discovered that she's an awful person.
Monica:	What did she say?
Stewart:	She made a couple of racist jokes. I found it completely repellant .
Monica:	What an offensive person.

Quiz

1. If someone's weekend sucked, their weekend was _____.
 - a) confusing
 - b) bad
 - c) rude
 - d) enjoyable

2. Which of the following is the best example of a germophobe?
 - a) someone who coughs
 - b) someone who is repellant
 - c) someone who uses the bathroom a lot
 - d) someone who uses hand sanitizer a lot

3. Kimberly is very sensitive to smells. She finds strong smells repellant. In other words, Kimberly finds strong smells _____.
 - a) satisfying
 - b) substances
 - c) waterproof
 - d) sickening

4. Which of the following is NOT a dirty look?
 - a) a facial expression of disgust
 - b) a facial expression of disapproval
 - c) a facial expression of surprise
 - d) a facial expression of annoyance

5. If you feel better after having a cold, you have _____ your cold.
 - a) gotten over
 - b) given over
 - c) grown past
 - d) gotten with

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.d 3.d 4.c 5.a

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Morag St. Clair

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free; *Step On* by Jahzzar; *Lobby Time* by Kevin (incompetech.com), licensed under Creative Commons by Attribution 3.0 License

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Study guide writer: Morag St. Clair

English editor: Stephanie Minelga

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox