



# GET SMART Newsletter

October 2017

## Becoming an Epidemiologist

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### What is Epidemiology?

Epidemiology is the study of diseases and other factors such as lifestyle, behavior and environment that potentially affect health in different populations.

### Who are Epidemiologists?

Epidemiologists are “disease detectives.” Epidemiologists use science-based facts and tools to solve mysteries of diseases that affect populations. They collect information on what happened such as: Who is sick? When did they get sick? What are the signs and symptoms (example: headache, fever, cough) of sickness? How did they get sick? The answers to these questions provide clues on what caused the illness and how to prevent it from affecting others in the population.

Epidemiologists work in many settings like health departments, government, hospitals and much more.

### How did I become an Epidemiologist?

My first experience with public health was when I studied in sixth grade in India. All I was interested in was to go out in the community and join on field trips. I signed up for a school science project on malaria. For the project, I accompanied my science teacher and a senior from 10<sup>th</sup> grade; we collected samples from the surfaces of stagnant water puddles and a pond in the neighborhood. The coolest part was when my teacher explained how they were going to send the water samples we collected to a laboratory. The laboratory would look for mosquito larvae and tell if these were the mosquitoes responsible

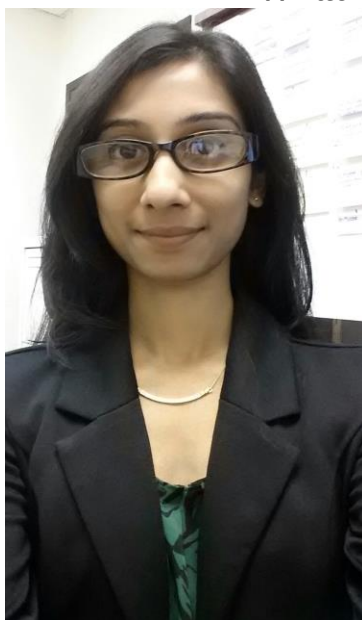
For a malaria issue in the neighborhood. My fascination to learn more about science, the environment we live in and human health continued. After becoming a doctor, I enrolled in a Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Public Health in Omaha, Nebraska (U.S.). During masters training, I learned about environmental and work-related factors that may affect health.

### What makes my job so cool?

I work at the Texas Department of State Health Services as an epidemiologist for environmental research. The best aspect of my job is the diversity of projects and the fact that two days are never the same. Right now, I am involved in recovery efforts to help the communities affected by Hurricane Harvey in Texas. I get to work with teams from different program areas within and outside the health department. I often get the opportunity to present my work at regional, national and international scientific meetings. I enjoy my career and consider it an opportunity to support the local and state public health agencies in disease prevention and control and promotion of health, making our communities healthier and safer.

### My message for young scientists

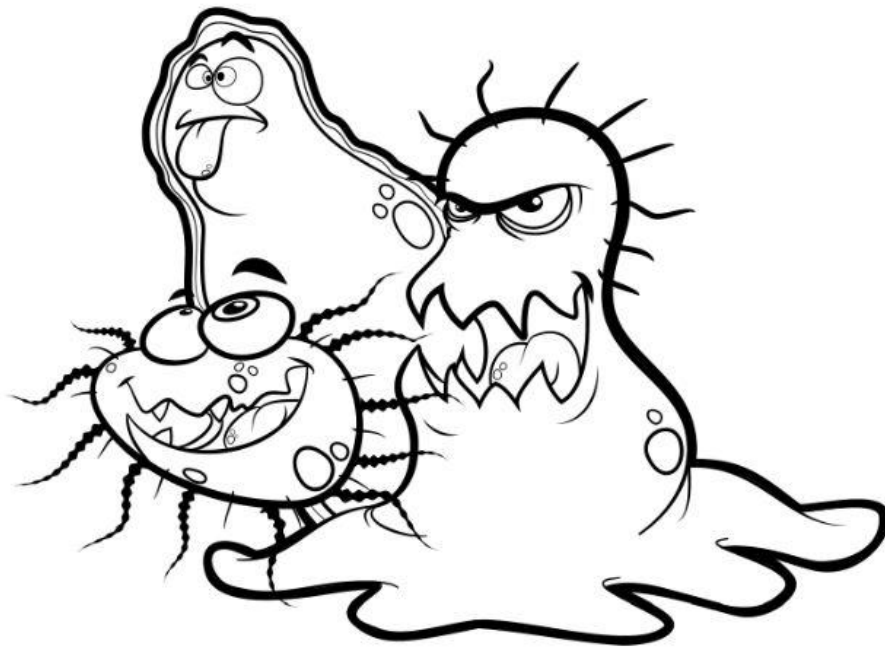
There are many public health issues in epidemiology from the local to the global level, that can be tackled by teamwork from individuals in all health fields. Be creative and curious to ask questions, learn science and have fun!!



## Fall Word Scramble

1. REMSG \_\_\_\_\_  
Hint: Covers your body and can make you sick!
2. ENEEZZS \_\_\_\_\_  
Hint: When you do this you should cover your nose and mouth
3. HOCGU \_\_\_\_\_  
Hint: When you do this you should cover your nose and mouth...again!
4. HSAW UYOR NADSH \_\_\_\_\_  
Hint: The best ways to get rid of nasty germs is to?
5. ADNH ITZSAENIR \_\_\_\_\_  
Hint: If there is no place to wash your hands what is the next best thing?  
Answers: Check back next month!

## Germ Coloring Activity



<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/26/dd/12/26dd127eaa65a8e3649e12a5a964b558.jpg>

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Get Smart drawing and video competitions this year!

Check out the November newsletter for the list of winners!



If you would like more information, please contact us. To unsubscribe, email [knowwhentosayno@pa.gov](mailto:knowwhentosayno@pa.gov).