



THEM Exhibition Tour

THEM is a captivating, unique exhibition that provides an inside look at the plethora of bacteria, microbes, parasites and other microorganisms that live in and on the human body. *THEM* offers visitors an intriguing view of the minute world thriving within their own bodies, and enables them to gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the microscopic forms of life that play essential roles in the functioning and survival of humans.

Visitors leave the exhibition understanding the following:

- Not all microbes are bad
- There will always be microbes/bacteria in and on humans
- There are unintended consequences of antibacterial products and antibiotic medicines

THEM explores three main themes:

Worlds Within You

Visitors are introduced to the idea that there are millions of organisms living in and on their bodies. Far from freeloading, these microbiota having been keeping humans healthy for years.

- **Clusters of THEM**

A silhouette lit with LED lights introduces visitors to the areas where their own microbiota cluster on and within the body and begins the conversation of how much of us is really “them”.

- **Array of THEM**

Three dimensional sculptures demonstrate five major groups of microorganisms that may inhabit the body. Visitors are encouraged to touch the sculptures and learn more about an example from each group.

- **Microscope**

Visitors use a video stereoscope to explore petri dishes filled with microorganisms. The attached monitor allows multiple onlookers to view the living organisms at one time.

- **Relative Scale**

Consider the different sizes of microorganisms, in particular the most infinitesimal ones, by comparing them to each other and to familiar objects.

- **Scope on a Rope**

A hand held microscope allows visitors to explore their own bodies at 50x magnification.

- **Core Samples**

Four areas of the body are highlighted through a series of ‘core samples’ to give visitors an inside view. Original award-winning scientific illustrations create a visual of internal cells, structures and microorganisms inhabiting the area.

Benefits and Balance

Understand what these microscopic critters do, how they keep us healthy and different scenarios in which microbes may cause illness.

- **Immune System Video**

A sequence of three animated videos walks visitors through the body’s lines of defense against harmful microbes.

- **Benefits Highlights**

From digesting food to aiding your immune system, native microbes provide a plethora of benefits essential to human survival. Explore a few of the major benefits we receive every day from our own microbiota.

- **Benefits Talkback**

Visitors are invited to express their opinions. Thought-provoking prompts ask visitors to leave their ideas on a large chalkboard to spark conversation with other visitors.

- **Beneficial Bacteria Game**

A state-of-the-art Microsoft surface table engages visitors in a hands-on competition to gather the beneficial bacteria which aid different areas of the body. Discovery Place is one of the first museums to utilize this revolutionary Microsoft product as part of an exhibition.

World Around Us

Visitors consider how behaviors and interactions with the outside world impact the microbes living within their own bodies.

- **Antibiotic Resistance Game**

Two Microsoft surface tables enable users to race for space in a competition between their native bacteria and invading bacteria...if the invaders take root on their virtual intestinal wall a wave of antibiotics sweeps in to help out, but resistant strains may wreak havoc.

- **Antibacterial Resistance**

Antibiotic drugs can be life saving medicines, but if misused or over-used, they can accelerate the evolution of resistant bacteria. Visitors can review a history of antibiotics starting with penicillin to the detrimental effects of antibacterial overuse. An original video mixing humor with fact produced in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control helps guests understand how antibacterial resistance develops.

- **Antibacterial Impacts**

Visitors are asked to make a choice in the products they use on a daily basis after being introduced to the potentially harmful impacts of antibacterial substances.