

SNOT SCIENCE

I never pick my nose. It's a disgusting habit. No, you will never see me poking around up there for a crusty piece of greenery and you will never see me rolling up a bogey before wiping it under my desk. You will never catch me licking the salty goo from my top lip every time my nose runs. How do I know it's salty? Er... a friend told me. No, picking and rolling, flicking and sticking, really is bad manners!

WHAT IS SNOT EXACTLY?

Your nose allows you to smell the sweet perfume of a beautiful rose or the eggy odour coming from Jimmy Grimble's bottom. But it is also designed to help you fight off any nasty bugs that are floating around in the air and stop them getting into your throat and lungs.

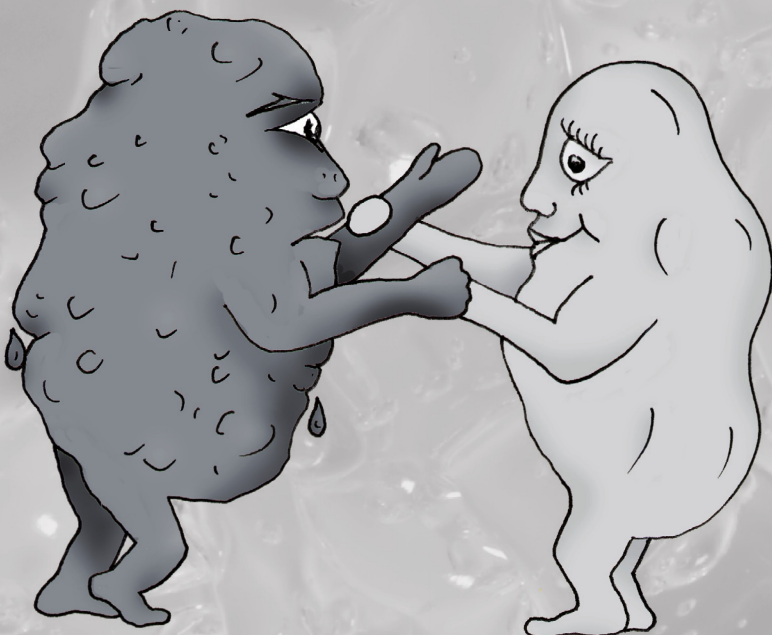
Some cells in your body are called *phagocytes* and they attack these nasty bugs by making special proteins called *lysozymes* – no wonder scientists are good at spelling!

These proteins help bust open, devour and digest the harmful bacteria trapped inside your nose in the same way as acid in your stomach will break down the breakfast you ate this morning.

So the more snot you have, the bigger the war inside your nose is! Which is why you have more snot when you have a heavy cold. And remember, by blowing your nose you are helping your body to flush these nasty germs out.

SO WHY GREEN?

Well, one of the bacteria killing proteins the *phagocytes* make has a form of iron inside it, and it is this that makes snot green and not purple or blue. However, as soon as snot leaves its moist, warm home, it will begin to dry up. When this happens, the *phagocytes* die and the greenish proteins break up to leave you with a brownish-black mess instead. Lovely!



Now, where did I put my hanky?