

Explore the Four Components of Blood

Blood carries necessary body fluids throughout the system and then carries waste away. Blood is made up of four different parts, and each part is important and unique. This activity will introduce your child to the four components of blood and give him a fun way to visualize its properties.

What You Need:

- Candy red hots
- Corn syrup
- White jelly beans or marshmallows
- Candy sprinkles
- Small mixing bowl



What You Do:

1. **Plasma** composes 55% of our blood, and is 90% water. It carries dissolved nutrients like glucose, protein and hormones to parts of the body and picks up waste to bring back to organs to be cleaned or "filtered" it out. In this activity, plasma is represented by the corn syrup. After discussing the properties of plasma, have your child fill the bowl approximately 55% full of corn syrup.
2. **Red Blood Cells** comprise 44% of our blood. Red blood cells contain hemoglobin and carry oxygen around the body. They only live for about 3 months. These cells are continuously reproduced in the bone marrow. In this activity, red blood cells are represented by the red hots. After discussing the properties of red blood cells, have your child fill the bowl approximately 44% full of red hots.
3. **White Blood Cells** account for .5% of our blood and are larger than red blood cells. They are built to fight infections. In this activity, white blood cells are represented by the white jelly beans. After discussing the properties of white blood cells, have your child add a few white jelly beans to the bowl.
4. **Platelets** account for .5% of our blood and help to clot our blood when we get a cut. Have your child add a few candy sprinkles to the bowl to represent platelets.

You've made plasma soup! To find out more about blood, do some online research to see what the cells look like under a microscope. If you know what your blood type is, share it with your child. If he (and you!) are up for it, bring your child along the next time you volunteer to give blood.