

# Germ Frenzy: Hype & Reality

## Prof. Karl J. Roberts

As a nation, we have become obsessed with germs and cleanliness, sometimes to the point of paranoia.

It seems that every day we are introduced to yet another invisible microbial threat that aims to eradicate us as a species. But how much do we really know about the microbial world around us?

While we can't escape the presence of germs, we all need to understand them and to realize that only the smallest fraction are the agents of disease and decay. In this talk, we will examine many of the roles microbes play in our world and how they influence our health and well being in both negative and positive ways.

We will also discuss the results of a large, comprehensive study on the ubiquity of germs in our environment, both at home and abroad, as well as role the media plays in disseminating information that lends itself more often to fear than understanding.

Dr. Roberts began his career as a high school biology teacher. Currently he is a tenured professor of biology (microbiology) at Prince George's Community College.

He has published research papers in plant ecology in refereed journals and have served as a consulting reviewer on several anatomy and microbiology texts. He has also served on grant review boards for the National Science Foundation, been a Grand Awards Judge for the International Science and Engineering Fair and as a Category Co-Chair for ISEF in 2006.

2:30 - 4:30 pm,  
Saturday, December 9,  
2006

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