



Let's Count Bacteria!

Lil' Tommy Lumpkins has some pretty strange hobbies. One of them is counting bacteria! Does that sound like fun to you? It does?! Well, ok, if that's what you want to do, let's join him!

Tommy starts putting slides loaded with spirochetes under the microscope. These things have a creepy spiral shape that makes them pretty hard to count, but we will do our best. There seem to be 576 bacteria on the first slide, 667 on the second, and 1329 on the third. How many of these disgusting little things are there in total?

Next, Tommy loads up a slide containing a kind of bacillus. Bacilli are rod-shaped bacteria. These particular ones are streptobacilli, meaning that they form long chains. Yuck. It looks like there are about 55 bacterial chains on the slide. The chains average about 10 bacteria each. How many bacteria are we looking at here?!

OMG. I am having trouble keeping my lunch down, but Tommy is just getting started! He pulls out his 16-slide collection of round bacteria. These are known as "cocci". He says there are 15,760 bacteria in the collection. We will have to take his word for it... no way am I counting that many germs! On average, how many bacteria are there on each of the slides?

Hunh... now this is kind of cool. Tommy shows us a slide containing what are known as Volvox. These are algae, not bacteria, but they are totally awesome so Tommy keeps some in his collection. These things form spherical colonies of cells that can swim around together. They even have eyespots that let them see light! The slide has 14 individual volvox colonies each of which contains about 2200 cells. How many cells in total are we looking at here?

Did you enjoy counting bacteria?

