



## The belly button lab: The gross and fun parts of microbiology

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### Abstract

The belly button is one of the habitats closest to us, and yet it remains relatively unexplored. In January of 2011, North Carolina State University's Public Science Lab launched the Belly Button Biodiversity project to investigate the microbes inhabiting our navels and the factors that might influence the microscopic life calling this protected, moist patch of skin home. In addition to inspiring scientific curiosity, Belly Button Biodiversity inspired conversations about the beneficial roles microbes play in our daily lives. Using the data from NCSU's project, along with the option of culturing their own microbiome, students will be able to understand the scientific method via a published research model, use various methods to analyze research data, conduct morphology identification, develop a research hypothesis, and optionally learn to culture microbes. Developed originally for online and hybrid learning during 2020, this lab can be used for online, hybrid, and in-person courses.

**Keywords:** Microbiology, scientific method, biodiversity

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