

Refrigerator Growth

Eventually, most everything in a refrigerator will spoil. Ask students if they are “growing” anything in their refrigerators? If so, ask them if they would like to share their “colonies” with the class. **STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BRING IN MICROBES GROWING ON MEAT OR MEAT PRODUCTS.**

Cheese (especially if it has been touched by dirty hands), can show growth in as little time as one week. Other good refrigerator growers include old cottage cheese, broccoli, cauliflower, beans (green and dry beans), limes, etc. Strawberries, oranges, tomatoes, and other fruit kept out on the counter can also grow colorful molds. Food items placed into the refrigerator, handled with clean hands and sealed tightly will be slower to show mold growth. If you want to accelerate growth of molds, expose food longer to the air. Mold spores are plentiful in the air!

With magnifying glass or a dissecting microscope, ask students to draw and color what they see. Is there an odor? Do some smell worse than others? Have similar molds grown on similar foods?

