

## Owl Pellets Classroom Safety Guide

Our Barn Owl Pellets are perfect to illustrate the nature of food webs and to demonstrate the role of predators in the ecosystem. The following tips will help keep you and your students safe.

### 1. Use sterilized Owl Pellets

Owl Pellets contain the fur and bones of small animals that the owl has ingested and can be a source of bacterial contamination. This is why Educational Innovations offers only Department of Agriculture approved, heat-sterilized pellets. Individually wrapped Owl Pellets are heat sterilized at 250° F for 4 hours to eliminate most bacteria, including salmonella. Sterilized Owl Pellets greatly reduce the risk of bacterial transmission. It is best to keep them wrapped until time of use.

### 2. Supervise dissection activities

Owl pellet dissection should be supervised by an adult familiar with lab safety practices.

### 3. Complete dissection activities in one day

Completing dissection in one day will reduce exposure and risk of infection and allow students to promptly dispose of the Owl Pellets and all disposable materials.

### 4. Handle Owl Pellets with care

This is good advice for all lab work involving biological materials. Students should handle pellets and all other biological materials as though they could be a source of bacterial or viral contamination.

### 5. Do not dissect Owl Pellets in areas of food preparation or consumption

Owl Pellets should not be dissected in school cafeterias or other food consumption areas. Similarly, students should not consume food or drink during this activity.

## **6. Protect the lab surfaces**

To minimize the risk of microbial infections, cover the work surfaces with impermeable, disposable materials. Newspaper, cardboard trays, or paper plates can be used as work surfaces while exploring Owl Pellets. The coverings should be disposed of following the dissection. Students should use only the provided equipment and avoid contact with pencils or other personal items that will remain in their possession after the activity.

## **7. Use gloves and wash hands**

Students should use disposable gloves during Owl Pellet dissections.

Face masks should be worn during dissection to avoid the possibility of inhaling any airborne particles. Students should not touch their faces or any other surfaces during the dissection. Students should wash their hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water once they have completed the activity.

## **8. Clean up thoroughly after dissection**

Be sure to wash and sanitize the work surfaces. We recommend using anti-bacterial cleansers such as Lysol, Clorox wipes, or anything that says "kills 99% of germs". Alternatively, you can use a 10% household bleach solution. Be mindful of the fact that chlorine bleach is corrosive and will irritate skin or damage clothing if used improperly. To wipe clean, use disposable paper towels rather than sponges or rags.