I.D.E.A. KIT

Snow Time

What You Need

Package of Insta-Snow (sodium polyacrylate)
Small bowl or tray
Plastic cup
Water

What You Do

1. Pour a small amount of Insta-Snow in the palm of your cupped hand.
2. Fill the plastic cup with water and pour it directly onto the powder in small amounts. Watch as it grows, and slowly add more water. Don't be afraid to experiment.
3. Catch the falling snow in a bowl or tray as you watch the Insta-Snow transform.

Questions to ask

- *What does the Insta-Snow feel like?*
- *What happens when you add more water to your snow?*
- *How is Insta-Snow different from actual snow? How is it the same?*

What's the Science?

Insta-Snow is an amazing superabsorbent polymer. It soaks up water using the process of osmosis (water molecules passing through a barrier from one side to another). When water comes into contact with the polymer, it moves from the outside to the inside, causing it to swell. These polymer chains have an elastic quality, but can stretch only so far and hold only so much water.

Try This

Extend your experiment: A variable is something you can change in an experiment. It is important to change one variable at a time, so you can determine the effect. What variables can you test with Insta-Snow? Does the temperature of the water make a difference? Can you color the water? Try other liquids? What happens when you add salt to your Insta-Snow?

Please Note

This material is considered to be non-hazardous and biodegradable. The finished product can be thrown in the trash or dissolved with excess water. Do not put Insta-Snow down the drain. In the event of a clogged drain, add table salt and water to break down the polymer. Insta-Snow is extremely slippery when wet.

Additional Resources

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal
Ten Ways to Hear Snow by Cathy Camper, illustrated by Kenard Pak

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pure science. pure fun.