

# Surface Tension

## Materials

- Small bowl
- Toothpicks
- Dish soap
- Ground pepper
- Milk
- Food Coloring

## Instructions

- Fill the bowl half way with water, then sprinkle a thin layer of ground pepper on the surface.
- Dip a toothpick in dish soap. Then touch the middle of the water with the toothpick's tip.
- As the dish soap touches the water, watch the grains of pepper. What happens to them?
- Fill another small bowl half way with milk. Then add two or three drops of food coloring in different places.
- Dip a toothpick in dishwashing liquid and touch the milk with it. What happens to the dyes as you do this?

## What's Going On?

Dishwashing liquid reduces surface tension. This allows the particles of water at the surface to spread out more. As they spread out, they push the pepper specks and the food dyes so that they spread out and merge together, creating patterns.

*Activity courtesy of "50 Science Things to Make and Do" by Usborne Activities.*