



Exploring Measurement— Human Body

How small is a nanometer?





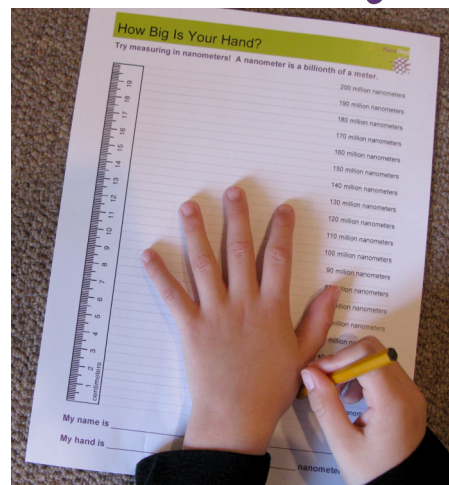
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Try this!

1. Mark your height on the wall chart.
2. How tall are you in nanometers?
3. Are you super tall? Or is a nanometer super small?

Then try this!

1. Trace your hand on a worksheet.
2. How many nanometers long is it?
3. Is your hand really big? Or is a nanometer really tiny?



What's going on?

One meter is a billion nanometers. (A meter is a little longer than a yard.)

So a kid who is a little over three feet tall measures one billion nanometers! Saying that you're a billion nanometers tall sounds pretty impressive, but it doesn't mean that you're super tall—it means that a nanometer is super small.

Here are some other ways to think about how small a nanometer is:

- The ridges in your fingerprints are around 250,000 nanometers wide.
- A strand of your hair is around 75,000 nanometers wide.
- Your DNA is two nanometers wide.
- Your fingernails grow one nanometer every second.

How is this nano?

A nanometer is a billionth of a meter. That's really tiny! Nanometers are used to measure things that are too small to see, like atoms and molecules. It takes a lot of nanometers to measure something relatively big, like you or your hand.

Nanoscale science focuses on things that are measured in nanometers, including atoms and molecules, the basic building blocks of our world. Scientists use special tools and equipment to work with nanometer-sized things. Regular tools like rulers are too big!

In the field of nanotechnology, scientists and engineers make new materials and tiny devices. Nanotechnology allows them to make things like smaller, faster computer chips and new medicines to treat diseases like cancer.

