

Microorganisms - An Introduction

Chapter 2: The Invisible Living World: Beyond Our Naked Eye · Topic 1

Key Concept

Bacteria are single-celled organisms that can be helpful (like those used in curd-making) or harmful (causing diseases like cholera). Viruses are even smaller than bacteria and can only reproduce inside a living host cell, causing diseases like the common cold and chickenpox. Fungi include yeasts and moulds, some useful (like yeast in bread-making) and some harmful (causing skin infections). Protozoa are single-celled organisms, some of which cause diseases like malaria.

Quick Revision Notes

- Microorganisms include bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa.
- They are found almost everywhere: soil, water, air, and inside living bodies.
- Bacteria: single-celled; can be helpful (curd) or harmful (cholera).
- Viruses need a living host cell to reproduce; fungi include yeast and moulds.

Practice Questions

- 1 Name three types of microorganisms.
- 2 Explain why viruses are considered different from bacteria in how they reproduce.
- 3 Give one helpful and one harmful example of a microorganism.