

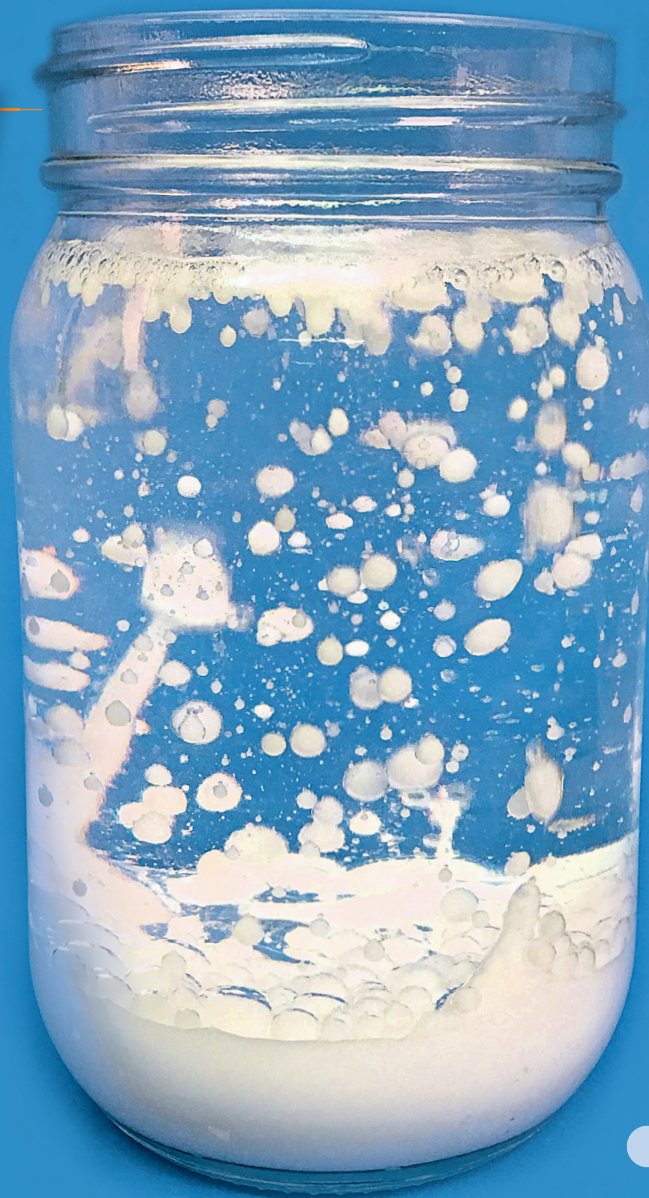


Things to make and do

WARNING!
Alka-Seltzer
contains aspirin.
Do not drink it.

Create a blizzard in a jar

Are you hoping for a white Christmas this year? Experiment with safe household materials to make your own snowstorm in a jar.



What you need

- Baby oil
- 1tsp blue food colouring (optional)
- 1tsp white paint
- 150ml water
- Clean jar
- Bowl
- Spoon
- Alka-Seltzer tablet (an adult will need to buy these for you)

How does it work?

Snow forms when tiny ice crystals in clouds stick together. If enough of these ice crystals stick together, they'll become heavy enough to fall as snow. It doesn't need to be below zero to snow; as long as the air temperature is below 2°C snow can fall. This experiment doesn't make real snow. Instead, it uses chemistry to create a blizzard. The oil is less dense than the water/paint mixture, which means that it rises to the top of the jar. When you add an Alka-Seltzer tablet, it releases bubbles of carbon dioxide gas. The bubbles push the coloured water up, which then sinks to the bottom again. When this happens over and over, you get an effect like a snowstorm.

SCIENCE FACT OR SCIENCE FICTION?



No two snowflakes are the same

Science fiction! In 1988, scientist Nancy Knight found two identical snowflakes while studying snow crystals from a storm in Wisconsin, in the US, using a microscope.



1 Pour baby oil into the jar until it is about three quarters full. Add the food colouring if you want some colour.



2 Next, mix the white paint and water together in a bowl until they are completely combined.



3 Slowly pour the paint and water mixture into the jar and leave until it settles to the bottom.



4 Snap the Alka-Seltzer tablet into bits. Add them to the jar one by one and wait for the blizzard to begin.