# CRYSTAL NEEDLES

**Observe how crystals form.**

## Materials
- 1 c. of warm water
- 4 tbsp. of Epsom salts
- Scissors
- Black construction paper
- Lid from a large jar

## Procedure
1. Cut a circle from the black paper that will fit inside the lid. Place the paper in the lid.
2. Add Epsom salts to the water and stir until they are dissolved.
3. Pour a very thin layer of the mixture into the lid.
4. Allow the lid to stand undisturbed for one day.

## Results
Long, needle-shaped crystals form on the black paper.

## Why?
The Epsom salt molecules move closer together as the water slowly evaporates from the solution. The salt molecules begin to line up in an orderly pattern and form long, needle-shaped crystals. The salt molecules stack together like building blocks, and the shape of the molecules determines the resulting shape of the crystal.

---

To learn more about the poles, check out the Pink Palace Museum's *Journey to the Poles* Laboratory Program.