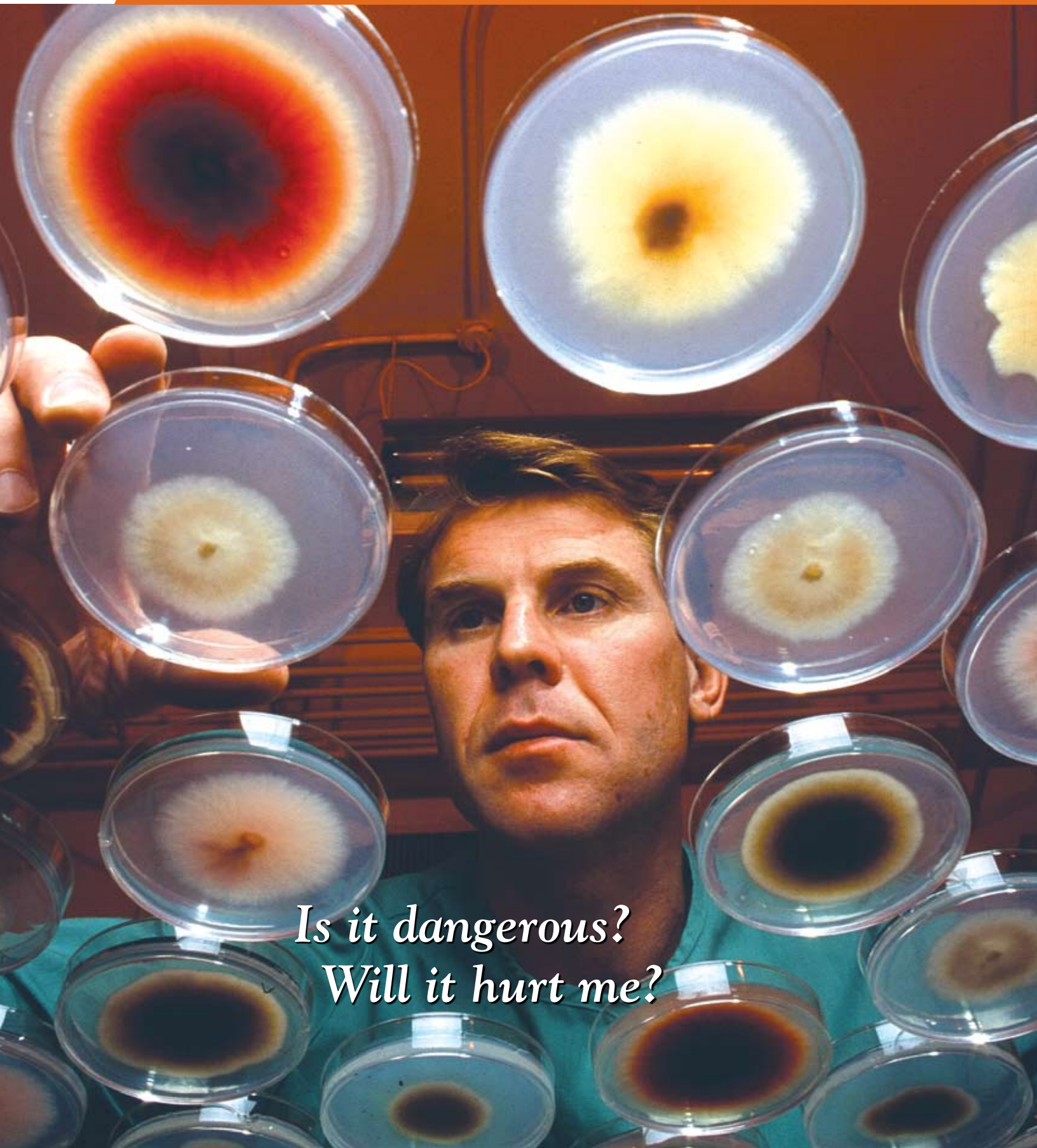


TOXICOLOGIST



*Is it dangerous?
Will it hurt me?*

Is it dangerous? Will it hurt me?

Toxicologists study the effects of potentially harmful chemicals on people, animals, and the environment. They use their knowledge of biology, chemistry, and the environment to devise strategies to reduce or control exposure to these chemicals.

Colleges and universities, government agencies, and industries employ toxicologists. Toxicologists who work for colleges or universities conduct research and teach. Those employed by the government or industry make sure that chemicals we use are safe and effective. Veterinarians trained in toxicology work in animal health diagnostic laboratories, while physicians and pharmacists with toxicology training work in human hospitals or poison control centers.

To be a toxicologist you need at least two years of study beyond a bachelor of science or medical degree (DVM or MD). Most toxicologists have doctoral degrees. Some earn undergraduate degrees in biology, chemistry, or environmental science. Others graduate with degrees in veterinary medicine, human medicine, or pharmacy. Graduate training in toxicology includes coursework in pharmacology, biochemistry, analytical chemistry, and environmental science, as well as toxicology.

In high school, you should take as much [biology](#), [chemistry](#), [mathematics](#), and [environmental science](#) as possible. Also, you should develop strong writing, communication, and computer skills.



Photo: U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service