GIANT MICROBES PLUSH TOYS
These adorable stuffed versions of nasty disease-causing microbes aren’t just for medical professionals. The surprisingly popular toy line has already moved 100,000 units. Sick with the flu? Snuggle up with a fluffy green Orthomyxovirus. Or if you don’t like someone but can’t come out and say it directly, give them a cuddly Black Death or Ebola. Each 5- to 7-inch doll comes with a picture and fact sheet about the real-life microbe. The GM gang added hepatitis and HIV this year in response to overwhelming demand from doctors, and they say we can expect a few new STDs in 2005. Catch ‘em all! [Giant Microbes: $6 to $7 each, www.giantmicrobes.com]

PALISADES STUFFED ALIENS
They latch onto your face, worm their way into your body, and then tear your heart in two. H. R. Giger’s aliens are terrifying on the big screen, but these extraterrestrial plush toys are at your mercy. The Facehugger’s aliens are fully poseable, 30-inch early-stage alien, with bendable legs that attach securely to any human head, and a long tail that wraps around an adult neck. (One gripe: Where’s the tracheal tube that slides down the host’s throat and implants the alien larva?) The Chestburster is a 48-inch-long replica of a second-stage alien, which ideally should be presented as a surprise gift a few days after the Facehugger – preferably at the dinner table. [Facehugger and Chestburster (ages 3 and up): $25 each, www.palisadestoys.com]