

A Timely Reminder

Staying Healthy



Taking good care of ourselves is second nature to many of us, but for our children, healthy habits need to be taught. Young children are active, hands-on explorers who need to touch everything. Their immune systems are not well developed, and they have not yet mastered their cleanliness routines so they are more at risk for illness than adults.

Sometimes, the threat of exposure goes beyond colds and minor ailments to the risk of serious illness.

The best way to avoid having a sick child is to try to prevent exposure and practice healthy living. From infancy on, we can help our children develop lifelong healthy habits. Of course, it isn't that hard to know what to do; *the hard part is doing what we know* and following through with our children. If we do the best we can, chances are that we — and our children — will lead healthy lives.

WE CAN PREVENT THE SPREAD OF GERMS! LET'S REMEMBER TO DO WHAT WE KNOW!



Cover Your Cough and Sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve, not your hands
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket
- Wash your hands as soon as possible using soap and water. If not available, clean with an alcohol-based hand cleaner

Teach young children to cough and sneeze into their elbow and wash!

Wipe Your Nose

Runny noses and children go together:

- Have tissues available to wipe your child's nose
- Teach children to use tissues, not their hands or sleeves
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket
- Teach children to wash their hands after rubbing their nose or putting their hands in their mouth

Wash Your Hands

Good hand washing begins with babies. After diapering an infant, take the time to gently wash his hands. As children grow, model good hand-washing skills and create hand-washing routines after the bathroom, before and after cooking, before and after meals, and after playing outside or with pets.

When to Wash Hands

- Before and after diapering/toileting
- Before and after cooking and eating
- Before and after giving medication
- After sneezing or blowing your nose
- After handling animals or their equipment
- After social waterplay
- After cleaning
- After working or playing outdoors

How:

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap. Then rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for 15–20 seconds, being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Rinse your hands well under running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows.
4. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel.

What type of soap should be used? Any type of soap may be used; hand-washing technique is most important. Keep bar soap in a self-draining holder that is cleaned before a new bar is put out.

Tips

- Show children how you wash your hands and talk about hand-washing
- Use fun soaps — pumps or colorful shapes
- Hand washing should take at least 15-20 seconds — just the time it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song two times. It's always someone's birthday somewhere!



Teaching Our Children Good Health Habits

Teaching our children about a healthy lifestyle begins with leading by example. When you can, include your child in the preparation of healthy meals and your regular exercise routine. In addition to having healthy habits, explain why you do things the way you do. Explain to your child that taking good care of her body means getting lots of exercise; plenty of rest; eating good, healthy foods; and practicing good hygiene.

- Regular, adequate sleep helps the body maintain energy to fend off germs, and rest also helps the body repair itself after a germ attack. Young children need 10–13 hours of sleep a night.
- Good nutrition gives the body's cells the building blocks for ongoing health. Healthy cells help protect against bad germs. Lots of fruits, vegetables, dairy, and whole grains are important for children.
- Everybody needs plenty of fluids throughout the day. Drink lots of water. When well hydrated, blood carries germ-fighting cells more efficiently and effectively, and breathing passages are protected with a layer of moisture.
- Daily exercise keeps the body's system in good working order.
- Children benefit from daily time outdoors, even in the winter. There's a smaller concentration of germs outdoors, and while moist breathing passages help repel germs, dry indoor air dries out breathing passages.

**For more information on staying healthy go to
www.brighthorizons.com/stayinghealthy.**

Healthy habits all the time!

