



Milestones Learning Center Family Minutes

A resource from our family to yours

August 2024

Back to School Means Back to Germs



Commercials are reminding you to buy the disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer, but the real ad campaign should be on working to remind your child (and yourself) just how effective handwashing is at keeping them well. There is no doubt that the return to school will be followed by viral infection, cough and runny nose, which for most children will be a small bump in the road but as a parent it will mean time off of work, doctor appointments, and long nights. There are a few things that you can start now to help prevent your child from becoming too ill - or worse - getting you sick.

How to Prevent Illness

Start with a regular handwashing routine. Make a reward system out

of it. You might think your child washes their hands a lot; but they usually do not use soap, wash for the length of time needed, or as often as they should. Everyone should be washing their hands before and after a meal, each time they come in from outside, certainly after every trip to the bathroom, and any time they cough or sneeze. Handwashing should be the length of time it takes your child to recite the alphabet or sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". As a parent you will want to make sure this is taking place.

Have both school clothes and at home clothes. Children will use their clothing as napkins, tissues, mulch baskets, chew toys and more. By establishing a routine where your child comes home from school, takes off their school clothing, washes their hands and face, and puts on "house" clothes will certainly reduce the amount of germs spread throughout your home.

Treat symptoms as soon as they start! Is your child coughing at night? Have you noticed a runny

nose? Treat it. They are going into a school with hundreds of other children. You do not want their immune system compromised. Do not wait until they can not stop coughing or can not sleep as the time to decide to address their health.

Trim your child's nails regularly. Children put their fingers in their mouths and noses just because. Dirt under nails can cause infections and illnesses. Monitor your child's nails and trim them weekly to reduce germs.

Continued





Things You Never Think About

When was the last time you cleaned your child's car seat? Really cleaned it. Children are in their car seat to go everywhere, even to the doctor when they are sick. Car seats sit in warm cars and are a welcoming environment to growing germs and bacteria. Yes, it is a challenge and could take real time in your day, but you will want to wash that car seat cover on a regular basis and spray it with a disinfectant when you pick an ill child up from school or take them to a doctor's appointment.

Children of all ages should have their bedding changed weekly if not more often. All plush items should also be on a washed on a regular rotation.

Our most precious comfort items are sick too. If your child falls ill,

you need to care for all their comfort items. To better aid your child in staying well, all "lovies", blankets, and plush toys should never leave the home. If your child sleeps with it, do not take it into stores, schools, or playgrounds.

Make sure that all sleeping items are easily washable and if necessary, have a backup for when one is being laundered.

Not So Fun Fact

Cell phones can be dirtier than money, with some studies finding that they can carry 10 times more bacteria than toilet seats. Just another good reason as to why your child should not be playing with your cell phone.

When is my child too sick to go to school or even a family party?

It is important to know your child's school ill policy and to follow it. A child who presents with a fever of 100 or higher, a persistent cough, difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, or a rash that a doctor has not diagnosed should not attend school or any other group event until symptoms subside. As parents you never want your child to miss out but it is your responsibility to your child, other children, and their families, to assess your child's health before attending any events. Having to cancel because your child is showing signs of becoming ill is the right thing to do.

Don't Forget!

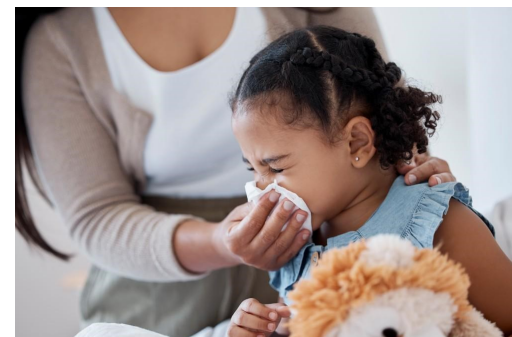
Hand sanitizer does not clean. It might sanitize but it does not disinfect; allowing there to be less germs on your child's hands but soap and water are still very much needed to be clean.

FAMILY READ

When I Get Sick: About Becoming Ill and Getting Better
by Dagmar Geisler

It is never fun to have a sick child but, in the event this occurs there is a wonderful book that can be shared with all ages. This book, which is part of *Safe Child, Happy Parent Series*, is perfect to teach children about illnesses they may be experiencing firsthand. *When I Get Sick* provides parents, grandparents, teachers, and caregivers the opportunity to speak with children about this important topic.

<https://www.amazon.com/When-Get-Sick-Becoming-Feeling/dp/151077095X>



Resources

- <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/quick-dose-is-your-cell-phone-making-you-sick>
- <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/whats-difference-between-products-disinfect-sanitize-and-clean-surfaces>
- <https://www.babyonthemove.co.nz/information-guides/car-seats/car-seat-cleaning-guide/>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/too-sick.html>