



Parents' guide to hygiene

Wash your hands. Brush your teeth. Did you use soap?" These are just a few of the phrases preschool parents repeat like a broken record. It's a fact: children and germs go hand in hand. Each day parents watch their children play in the sand at the park, stick fingers in their noses and mouths, pick up slimy creatures, and reach eagerly for food that's fallen on the ground.

Getting preschoolers to take over the brushing, scrubbing and rinsing themselves is an important step in the development of a preschooler's independence. Not only does it give parents a welcome break and help ditch the dirt in the short term, but teaching basic hygiene concepts to children at a young age will form the groundwork of a healthy lifestyle in the future.

Proper Hygiene

Just as you teach your child the steps to ride a bike or play a game, it's important for you to teach your child proper hygiene habits. Personal hygiene can include such skills as how to properly wash hands, take a bath, brush teeth and hair, and follow proper toilet training skills. "The most common health issues that come up is from preschoolers playing with unsanitary things and then touching their mouths before washing their hands. Paediatricians suggest at this age it is primarily hand washing that will keep children healthy.

Get in the Habit

Help train your child to get in the habit of washing his hands after certain activities such as using the toilet, playing at the park, and being at a friend's house. Keep a regular schedule for taking baths and help your child brush teeth and hair in the morning and before bedtime every day. If your child gets in the habit of regular hand washing, brushing teeth, and bathing, it will become more natural and reminders from parents will be less necessary. One of the most effective ways to teach consistency in good hygiene is to set a good example as a parent by washing your hands, and brushing your teeth and hair in front of your child regularly.



What about Germs?

It's important to gently explain the idea of germs to your child, without scaring him. You want your child to feel free to make mud pies and pick up insects, without the fear of germs. Teach the children that not all germs are bad, but that some germs can make us sick. Talk to them about how fast germs can spread, and that washing hands will keep them safe. The key is to focus on what your child can do for his body to stay healthy rather than focusing solely on germs.



Tips on how to help your child learn to blow their OWN NOSE

The majority of children are coordinated enough physically to blow their own nose by age 2 – But many children are not interested in blowing their own nose. They are perfectly content keeping their nasal secretions to themselves. Until your child can clear their nasal passages themselves, make sure

that you do it for them.

If your child does not yet blow their own nose, here are some things you can try to encourage the skill. Once your child has the motivation to blow his nose, teach him not to blow it too forcefully – this can cause secretions to enter the sinuses and middle ears and cause an infection.

- Imitation – show them how you blow your nose. Kids love to be like Mum and Dad, sometimes which is all the encouragement they need.
- Rewards – offer them a sticker or a small reward if they try to blow their nose.
- Imagery – Have them pretend to blow out imaginary birthday candles with their nose. You can go all out and sing happy birthday too, if it helps! You can also suggest that they try and play a pretend horn with their nose, or blow up an imaginary balloon using their nose.
- Make it fun – Supply them with tissues with their favourite cartoon characters on the box, and have a nose blowing contest. See who can blow the quietest, the shortest, the longest, and the funniest.
- Work on it when they are healthy – Work on the nose blowing skill while they are healthy by having them blow dandelions, blow bubbles in the bath with their nose, and blow tiny pieces of tissue paper across the table with their nose.
- Go for the gross factor - many kids will blow their nose if you give them a hand mirror and let them see the mucus as it comes out of their nose. If you act really grossed out by the discharge, it adds to the fun and encourages them even more.

▪ Make Teaching Hygiene Fun

Learning to take care of his body should be fun for your child and not a chore. Here are some ideas to be creative

- Pretend to be a ‘germ detective’ and use a magnifying glass to examine your child’s hands and teeth and give them a secret mission to look for germs.
- Let your child pick out a special soap and toothpaste at the store that he’ll use to wash his hands and body and to brush his teeth. There are many “cool” soaps out there, such as soaps in the shapes of animals and scented foam soaps. When your child is involved in the selection of products to use, he will feel that he has ownership of the hygiene process.
- Use a “puppet helper.” Have your child choose a puppet that will be a washing buddy in the bath or remind him to wash hands when he gets home. Being "helped" by a puppet and being nagged by a parent will get different results from your child.
- Teach your child how to bathe different body parts by using a favourite doll as an example in the bathtub.

