

Top Ten Ways To Stay Healthy



1. **Encourage good Handwashing.** According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) the number one method for controlling the spread of disease is **Handwashing**. Make sure you use soap, warm water, and wash all surfaces of the hands. A simple way to ensure you have washed long enough is to silently sing the “Happy Birthday” song to yourself twice while washing. Follow washing with a good rinse, pat hands dry, and use the towel to turn off the faucet to avoid getting hands dirty again. Wash hands after blowing the nose, playing with pets, before eating, after using the restroom, or when they are visible dirty.

2. **Make sure your child gets enough sleep each night.** Children should get between nine and ten hours of sleep each night in order to feel rested. Those who do not get enough sleep are often groggy, irritable, and have decreased alertness in school. It’s easy to see how school performance and behavior are negatively affected when children are not rested.

3. **Make sure your child eats breakfast each day.** Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast actually do better on tests, and are better able to fight off disease and infection. Breakfast should consist of wholesome nourishing foods such as cereal, fruit, juice, milk, eggs, peanut butter, toast, etc.

4. **Encourage your child to drink plenty of water.** Many of the complaints that bring students to the clinic can be attributed to dehydration, such as headaches, stomachaches, sore throats and nosebleeds.

5. **Dress your child appropriately for the weather.** Children who are too hot or too cold will have difficulty concentrating. During the winter months hats decrease heat loss through the head, and gloves protect against frostbite. Proper footwear should also be considered: boots during snowy times, shoes and socks during more mild weather. “Flip-flops” are never appropriate footwear for school.

6. **Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.** Cold and flu germs are spread through the air. Covering the mouth and nose can decrease the spread of germs. Teach your student to cough/sneeze into his/ her bent

elbow, thus decreasing the amount of germs in the air, and keeping the hands cleaner.

7. **Keep your student home if he/she has a fever.** For school purposes, a fever is 100 degrees F. **Your child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication prior to returning to school.** Even if your child feels better, fevers often return if he/she is sent to school too soon. Keeping your child home will also help limit the spread of disease to other students.

8. **Keep your student home if he/she vomits during the night.** As with fevers, vomiting often occurs again if the child is sent to school too soon. Keeping him/her home allows for rest and recovery, and protects other students from exposure.

9. **Follow directions on medication prescribed for your child.** If your child has been prescribed antibiotics or eye drops for pink eye, please make sure the medication is completed, even if your child feels or looks better. This medication must be taken in its entirety in order to ensure the condition is resolved. Failure to finish antibiotics may allow the condition to return.

10. **Consider your home environment.** Remember the old adage: Children learn what they live. Modeling healthy behavior can help your child learn healthy habits. Children are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors such as good diet, daily exercise, and not smoking when the home environment encourages it. Also, studies have shown that second hand smoke increases the likelihood of respiratory illness in children.