

A word about over-the-counter medications.



Always follow the instructions for giving any over-the-counter medications.

Remember, children younger than age 4 should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first talking to your health care provider.

If you are going to give your child acetaminophen, be sure to use the right amount based on your child's age and weight. Wait the correct amount of time between doses. Use the measuring tool that comes with the medicine. You may want to keep a written record of when and how much acetaminophen you give your child.

Aspirin or aspirin-containing products should not be given to any child, aged 18 or younger, with a confirmed or suspected case of flu due to the risk of complications (Reye's syndrome).

Following these prevention tips and checking with your child's health care provider as needed will be your family's best protection against illness!

PEC APP 8/09

If your child has a flu-like illness, keep him at home. He should not go to school, child care or into the community except for medical care. Keep him at home until he has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

If your child starts showing symptoms or feeling sick while at school or child care, he should be separated from others as soon as possible and should go home as soon as possible.

Please remember it is important that children stay home and not go to another child care center or any other group settings while sick. This will help prevent spread of germs.

If possible, keep your child at arms length from other family members at home. This can be a challenge!

Everyone should take extra care to keep their hands clean with alcohol based hand sanitizer or warm water and soap and cover their coughs and sneezes.

Preventing the Spread of Germs in Child Care and At School

Tips for Parents and Caregivers



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Germs are spread through droplets in the air (coughing or sneezing), skin-to-skin contact (sports) or by touching an object or surface that has germs on it and then touching hands to face. Children of all ages are in different types of group settings every day. This makes it very easy for germs to be spread. And even though we have immunizations for many infections, there are still plenty of germs out there!

Prevention Happens Every Day!

As a parent or caregiver, there are several things you should do to help keep your children healthy:

Make sure your children wash their hands frequently; use soap and warm water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Younger children will need your help and older children may need your watchful eye. As most colds and other germs are spread by hands, this is the best way to prevent infections. *It is best if pre-school children wash their hands and only use hand sanitizer sparingly.

Remind children and teenagers to keep their fingers out of their eyes, noses and mouths.

Teach younger children and reinforce with older children the importance of

covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or teach them to cough or sneeze into a bended elbow.

The goal is to keep germs from spreading through the air as well as off their hands. They should wash their hands as soon as possible after coughing or sneezing.

If your child is "not himself," **pay attention** for signs of illness. The earlier you catch the start of an illness, the easier it is to keep it from spreading to others. If your child is sick, keep your child at home.

Don't forget to keep your children's vaccinations up to date.



What about skin infections?

Some germs, especially some bacteria, are spread by direct contact with someone else's skin or by sharing items such as sports equipment or towels that have touched infected skin. Again, you can help your children protect themselves by teaching them to:

Use their own towel or sports equipment; don't share with a family

member or friend.

Use a towel or some other barrier between their skin and any shared exercise equipment.

Show you any rashes, bumps or pimples they might find on their skin, especially anything that is draining.

Keep any skin infections covered with a clean, dry bandage until it has healed.

Wash their hands well with an alcohol based hand sanitizer or warm water and soap, especially after changing a bandage or cleaning a wound.

If your child plays any group sports, be sure to follow the group or school's policies about playing with any type of skin rash or infection.



What if my child has a flu-like illness?

Illnesses caused by flu viruses may be hard to tell apart from illnesses caused by other viruses, especially when symptoms are the same, such as coughing and sneezing. Young children are less likely to have typical flu symptoms (e.g., fever and cough).