

Disease Prevention and Immunization

When your child is sick, it often makes a parent feel helpless. The sickness of a child warrants having to watch while nature takes its course or wait until the medication kicks in. But often sickness and disease can be avoided. Science has come a long way in finding preventive methods for sickness, but parents must take the initiative to practice these methods and convey such education to your children. Everyday, your child comes in contact with countless germs and harmful disease-causing bacteria -- whether it be in school, on the playground, or at home. Educate yourself and your children on how to prevent illness. Teach them the importance of healthy hygiene and washing hands. Simple germ-prevention procedures can help to protect your child from hepatitis A, colds and flu, and infectious diseases such as meningitis.

In this section, fun activities help to communicate the concept of invisible germs. An explanation of the human immune system and its function of fighting disease is also beneficial. Also available are facts that you should know to obtain appropriate immunizations for your child. Keep in close contact with your doctor in order to do what is best for your child. Ask for the safest vaccination, postpone your child's shots if he is suffering from other ailments, make up missed vaccine doses, and know normal versus rare post-vaccination side effects. Be aware of possible allergies that your children may have, and ways to avoid contaminated foods that can cause food poisoning. This section provides preventive measures to help care for your family. Decrease your family's chance of health risks by avoiding those unnecessary and often expensive doctor visits. Remember to practice preventive habits such as getting adequate sleep, properly immunizing, maintaining good hygiene, preventing germs, and eating properly cooked and handled foods.

Disease Prevention can be practiced right at home. Teach your children about invisible germs and safe practices with fun activities. Here are some activities that may make this task a little more interesting.

ACTIVITY #1: " Songs to Sing"

It's important that your child maintain proper hygiene and practice disease prevention techniques such as brushing teeth, taking bathes, and washing hands. Sing these songs with your child next time they are in the bath. Provide bath toys and soap bottles that have been cleaned and are free of detergent.

<p>" Here's A Bubble"</p> <p>(Sung to the tune of Frere Jacques)</p> <p>Here's a bubble; here's a bubble. Big and round; big and round. See it floating gently, See it floating gently, To the ground. To the ground.</p>

ACTIVITY #2: " Bath Time is Important"

Discuss with your children the importance of bathing. Share with them that during the day, we are playing with a variety of toys, both inside and outside. When we touch these items, they may have germs on them, which get on our bodies. These germs can make us sick, especially if they get in our mouth or eyes. Explain that we can usually see dirt, but we are not able to see germs. Germs are very tiny and can only be seen with a special machine called a 'microscope.' Tell your kids that because these germs are so small, we may not look dirty, but after a full day of working and playing, we probably are. This is why bathing and washing hands with soap are important.

ACTIVITY #3: " Glitter Time"

Do this activity with your child or with the whole family. Pour a different color glitter for each person in a paper plate. Each person apply lotion on their right hand and dip it into their plate. Have the children, shake hands with another person (or you and your child shake hands with each other). Ask your child how many colors he sees before and after he shake hands. Tell the children to pretend the glitter is really germs, and that the germs spread the way the different colored glitter spread. Ask questions such as "Why do you see different 'germs' on your hands now?" "How do germs spread?" "How can you prevent germs from spreading?" Answers may include: Germs spread from one person to another when they touch each other, share cups or utensils, cough or sneeze, etc. People can wash hands, cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing, or not share drinking cups or utensils. After the discussion, practice washing the 'germs' off using our five handwashing tips. While washing hands, point out how difficult it is to remove all of the glitter

"Scrub-a-Dub, Scrub-a-Dub"

(Sung to the tune of "This Old Man")

**Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub
Scrub my finders, arms, and hands
Scrubbing fastest in the land.
Scrub-a-dub, Scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub,
Scrub my toes and legs and feet
Scrubbing bubbles, what a treat.
Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub,
Scrub my ears and face and hair
Water, bubbles, what a pair.
Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub,
Scrub my back and belly, too
So much fun...how about You!**

TIPS ON HANDWASHING

Health professionals claim that handwashing significantly reduces the risk of spreading germs and infectious diseases. Practice these five simple steps with your children.

5 STEPS TO STAY FRESH

- 1) Wet your hands with warm, running water.
- 2) With soap, rub the fronts and backs of your hands, between fingers, and under fingernails for 10-20 seconds (count slowly to 10 if this helps).
- 3) Rinse hand under warm running water and count again up to 10.
- 4) Dry your hands with a clean paper or paper towel. Use the towel to turn off the faucet, not your clean hands.
- 5) To avoid your skin from getting sore, add hand lotion.

Get your child in the routine of washing hands frequently:

BEFORE: 1) water play, 2) eating and handling foods.

AFTER: 1) having a diaper change, 2) using the bathroom, 3) playing outdoor or in sand, 4) playing with animals

PARENTS, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Wash your hands before:

- feeding an infant or child
- giving medication to a child
- breastfeeding, cooking, or eating.

Wash your hands after:

- using a toilet or helping a child to use a toilet
- changing a diaper
- taking care of a sick child
- handling animals or cleaning pet products
- wiping noses (when possible)

Routine cleaning of toys and surfaces:

- Scrub toys & surfaces with soap and water.
- Use disinfectant cleanser where children play in groups.
- Use wipes such as disposable paper towels or other throw- aways. Rinse sponges after use.

HOW SHOULD YOU WASH A BABY'S HANDS?

- Use soap and a warm, wet, fresh towel (either paper or cloth).
- Rinse the baby's hands. Use another wet and warm towel.
- Dry hands thoroughly.

This information came from the Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov.

Music and Books about Bath Time

MUSIC

- " Rubber Ducky" from Bert and Ernie Sing Along (Sesame Street, 1975).
- " Bathtime " by Raffi from Everything Grows (Shoreline Records, 1987).
- " Washing My Neck " from The Butterfly Jar by Jeff Moss (Bantam, 1989).
- " Turning Off the Faucet " from The Butterfly Jar by Jeff Moss (Bantam, 1989).
- " Rub-A-Dub-Dub " (traditional)

BOOKS

- ~ Max's Bath by Rosemary Wells (EP Dutton 1985).
- ~ Bernard's Bath by Joan Elizabeth Goodman (Boyds Mills, 1996).
- ~ Bathtime Boots by Satoshi Kitamura (Ferrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998).
- ~ I Don't Want to Take a Bath by Julie Sykes (Little Tiger, 1988).
- ~ Bunny Bath by Lena Anderson (R & S, 1990).
- ~ King Bidgood's in the Bathrhub by Audrey Wood (Harcourt Brace, 1985).
- ~ To the Tub by Peggy Perry Anderson (Houghton Mifflin, 1996).
- ~ No More Water in the Tub by Tedd Arnold (Dial Books, 1995).
- ~ Fozzie's Bubble Bath by Stuart Bergen (Grosset & Dunlap, 1996).
- ~ Splash! All about Baths (Little, Brown, 1992).
- ~ Just a Bubble Bath by Mercer Mayer (Good Times Publishing, 1997).