

To help reduce the spread of germs, your children should wash their hands at school at the following times:

Before

- Eating at lunch and break times
- Any cookery activities

After

- Using the toilet
- Coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose
- Playing outside in the playground
- Touching or handling class pets
- Whenever hands look dirty or if they have touched a dirty surface



Did you know?

Use of a hand sanitiser has been shown to reduce illness-related absenteeism in school children by up to 49 per cent.³ You could give your child a hand sanitiser to take to school for use in between hand washing.



Did you know?

The majority of respondents (66%) to a recent global survey believe that asking children to wash their hands before eating a meal is the best way to protect them from picking up germs and becoming ill.⁴

Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases

It is important that kids are taught to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. The tissue must then be discarded in a bin and hands should be thoroughly washed to help prevent the spread of germs.

Other Top Tips

There are a few steps you can take to help protect your child:

- Keep their schoolbag clean especially if they carry food items like a packed lunch
- Ensure your children bring home their gym clothes weekly for washing
- Washing clothes at a high temperature (60°C or higher) will kill germs. If you need to wash at a lower temperature, add a laundry disinfectant. Always follow manufacturing instructions
- Make sure children understand the importance of changing their underclothes and socks daily
- Good hand washing as well as coughing and sneezing etiquette, apply both in and out of school

Can my Child be Too Clean?

As a parent, the health of your child is one of your key priorities, and some parents may worry that their child is too clean, or even not clean enough...

The practice of increased hygiene such as hand washing and surface disinfection has been scientifically shown to reduce infection and decrease levels of illness and does not correlate with any increase in atopic (allergic) diseases.

The Hygiene Council would like to assure you that exposure to some microbes is an important step in the process of "natural immunisation" of your child. However, exposure to harmful pathogens that can cause serious infections is unnecessary and preventable by good hygiene habits.

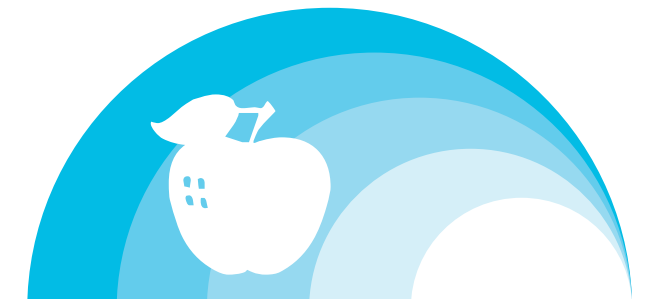
For more information on hygiene in schools, visit www.hygienecouncil.com

¹ Scott E, Gaber DJ, and Cusack TM. Chemical disinfection of microbial contaminants on surfaces, disinfection, sterilisation and preservation, 5th ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: 2000: 1205-1219.

² Centre for Disease Control. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/> Last accessed March 2009.

³ World Health Organization. Available at: <http://www.who.int/en/> Last accessed April 2009.

⁴ International Consumer Hygiene Attitudes and Behaviours Survey, Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS), March-May 2009



Back to School



Germ Protection: Back to School





Whether it is your child's first day back at school or they are just getting back into their usual routine after a break, one thing is certain; as they return to the class room they will be mixing with more children than they have been at home. Because these children are likely to have been exposed to different germs, there is a greater risk that your child will bring an infection home.

Data from the US suggests that in nurseries and daycare centres children are up to 3.5 times more likely to get diarrhoea than children who stay at home.¹ In a study, 16% of apparently clean surfaces in a day care centre were contaminated with rotavirus, the leading cause of diarrhoea in children.¹ The Center for Disease Control estimates that the average school child misses approximately one week of school a year due to illness.²

Whilst children are more likely to only suffer from common minor illnesses such as a common cold or a tummy upset, they may have to stay off school and you or someone else will have to stay at home to look after them. To try and reduce this burden of infection, here are some simple tips you can follow.

Hand Washing

It is recognized that simple hand washing is one of the most effective ways to help stop the spread of infection.³

It is never too early to start teaching your child to wash their hands and most children are happy to have a go, and they learn by example. Why not practice good hand washing together? Try making up a song, or turn it into a game to encourage hand washing.

In Safe Hands with Dettol: Setting Habits for Life

- Encourage children to wash all parts of their hands, even hard to reach areas like between the fingers
- Ensure children wash their hands for long enough, suggesting that they might sing a short song like 'Happy Birthday' twice to remind them how long they need to clean for
- Talk to your child about why using soap and water is important. Explain to them that water alone will not get rid of the invisible germs that might give them a 'upset tummy'

Did you know?

Nearly three quarters (71%) of the world's population learn the majority of their good hygiene habits from their family when growing up.⁴



How to Wash Hands

It is also important to make sure that your kids are washing their hands properly following these eight steps:

1. Wet hands and apply soap. Rub palms together until soap is bubbly
2. Rub each palm over the back of the other hand
3. Rub between your fingers on each hand
4. Rub backs of fingers (interlocked)
5. Rub around each of your thumbs
6. Rub both palms with finger tips
7. Rinse your hands under clean running water
8. Dry your hands with a clean dry towel



When to Wash Hands

Children don't always understand when to wash their hands or why they need to do this. It is tempting to think that if your hands look clean then they don't need washing, but of course you can't see germs. Try explaining to your children that germs cause coughs, colds and tummy upsets and that germs are too small to see, but can be found almost anywhere, such as in the playground, toys and desks and can spread easily.