

Parenting Together

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1

January 2020



Start the New Year with Healthy Practices!

There are many things you can do for your family to promote healthy practices. Eat a healthy, balanced diet, move and exercise, talk about your feelings and manage stress, etc. With the New Year beginning in the middle of cold and flu season, here are some reminders and easy tips you can use (in addition to getting your flu shot!) to practice to promote healthy living in the New Year (and hopefully minimize the chance of your children getting a cold or the flu!).

Six Tips to Help Keep Your Children Healthy During Flu Season

- 1** *Wash hands frequently at home and school*
Because children often touch their mouths and faces, parents should make sure their children's hands are washed with soap and water to remove germs before eating, after using the bathroom, and when they come inside from playing. Hand sanitizer can be used in a pinch, for times it is not possible to wash with soap and water.
- 2** *Get active! Indoors or outdoors, make it a priority*
Children love to play and it is good for them to do so! They should get regular, moderate exercise not only for general health & wellbeing, but also to help boost their immune systems. Studies have shown that being active can help reduce cold and flu episodes.
- 3** *Get plenty of sleep*
On average, children need between 9 and 14 hours of sleep each day depending on their age. You will likely have happier, more agreeable children if they get the recommended amount of sleep. In addition, a lack of sleep can weaken the immune system and increase the risk of getting sick.

4 Eat a well-balanced diet

Provide your children with meals that have plenty of colorful fruits and vegetables to help boost their immune systems. Look for foods rich in vitamin C & vitamin D, and avoid foods high in additives, preservatives, and sugars.

6 Avoid germy sharing

Sharing is good for children, but many commonly shared items can be a breeding ground for germs. To be safe this time of year, teach children to never share straws and cups, caps and scarves, or anything that comes in contact with their mouths and faces. When children do get sick, it is important for parents to keep them home and take steps to prevent germs from spreading to others.



5 Decrease stress




Talk about feelings and share ideas for what the children and adults in your family can do when having challenging feelings. Elevated stress hormones can lead to decreased immunity. Give children plenty of down time for rest and creative play to help lower their stress levels and keep them from getting sick.


Handwashing Song

Children (and adults!) can sing this TWO TIMES while washing their hands to ensure they wash long enough.




Twinkle, twinkle, little star, 

   Look how clean my two hands are.

  Soap and water, wash and scrub, 

 Get those germs off, rub-a-dub.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, 

   Look how clean my two hands are.

The Book Nook

Your Skin and Mine
by Paul Showers

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato
by Lauren Child

Alimenta tu cuerpo/Fuel the Body
by Amanda Doering Tourville

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References

Cold & Flu Season: Keep Your Family Healthy

<https://www.chla.org/blog/rn-remedies/cold-flu-season-keep-your-family-healthy>

What can parents do to lessen the chances of their kids getting a cold or the flu?

<https://uihc.org/health-topics/six-tips-keep-children-healthy-during-cold-and-flu-season>

8 secrets to keeping your family healthy this winter

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/8-secrets-keeping-family-healthy-winter/>

