A clean and healthy start to school

Fourth edition

A CPHVA guide for parents and carers who have children starting school

Developed in partnership with RB, makers of Dettol

Working together to promote good hygiene

Dettol

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CPHVA

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Working together to promote good hygiene

RB, the makers of Dettol, are proud to partner with many organisations to help provide you with the best information to help protect you and your family from infections and stay healthy. Globally, we have numerous local partners who help us develop our resources on family health. We have partnered with the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association (CPHVA) for more than a decade to produce a range of resources to promote good hygiene practice in the community. To find out more about Dettol's professional partnerships, and access other resources for healthcare professionals, childcare providers and parents, visit **www.dettol.co.uk**.

The CPHVA represents school nurses, health visitors, nursery nurses and other community nurses working in primary care. The CPHVA is committed to advancing practice through education, research and innovation, improving the working lives of its members, and the health and well-being of the public. By producing this booklet, the CPHVA aims to promote good hygiene practice in the community. They welcome support from industry in the production of training material for their members. However, they do not endorse products from any particular manufacturer.

CPHVA members can view or download this resource online, via the Community Practitioner Educational Hub at **www.commprac.com/educational-hub**.

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Foreword

Parents and carers want their child to be happy, confident and safe in their new school and as a result, school nurses may deal with many health concerns from parents and carers of children in the reception year. Whilst school nurses play an active role as leaders in the effort to prevent illness and promote healthy schools, maintaining the health and safety of hundreds of children is a huge task for any one individual. Therefore, the CPHVA, working with RB, the makers of Dettol, has produced this booklet to help school nurses and other professionals provide parents and carers with information that will help alleviate some of their child's and their own concerns about starting school. The information is easy to read with visuals that parents and carers can use to help discuss health issues with their children.

I hope, as parents and carers of preschool children, you will find this resource useful and that it helps your children to stay healthy as they start school.

Gavin Fergie,
Professional Officer, Unite-CPHVA.

Introduction

Starting school is a major milestone in your child's life. It can also be the first time they encounter some of the wide variety of germs that cause infections, such as colds, flu and tummy upsets. When your child starts school, their exposure to germs will naturally increase through close contact with other children and through sharing school facilities and equipment. Because your child's immune system is still developing, they will be less able to fight off these germs and more likely to become ill. Some children may also have incomplete immunisations and understand little about good hygiene practices. This will further increase the risk of infections, both to the child and to those around them. The result may be what seems like endless coughs, colds, tummy upsets and other infections that exhaust you and your child, and can disrupt your child's learning.

Having your child immunised according to the national schedule can help to protect them from some serious diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. However, it is not possible to immunise children against every type of disease. And whilst a balanced diet and an active lifestyle can help to keep your child healthy, good hygiene is the key to stopping the spread of germs and preventing infections.

This booklet aims to help you equip your child with the hygiene skills they need to protect their health once they start school. It also explores some common health-related concerns associated with starting school and provides advice on safeguarding your child's and your own health through good hygiene at home. If you require further information or advice about keeping your child healthy, consult your GP, practice nurse, health visitor or school nurse. The head teacher and Early Years Foundation Stage staff should be able to address any other concerns you may have about your child starting school.

Learning to manage alone

Your child's primary school will probably give you and your child lots of advice that will help your child to settle into school. However, there are things you can teach your child at home that will help prepare them for their first day and ensure they stay healthy.

Washing hands

Try to get your child into the habit of washing their hands regularly, particularly after visiting the toilet, and before eating or helping in the kitchen. Thorough hand washing using soap and warm water is one of the best ways to stop germs from spreading and causing colds, flu, tummy upsets and other infections.

Do not assume that your child knows how to wash their hands – show them how to do it properly. Children learn best by example, so make sure you wash your own hands properly too

The school toilets may be different to those your child uses at home (see page 8). If possible, visit the school toilets with your child.

When to wash your hands

Before	After	Before and After
• Handling food or eating • Handling sterilised equipment or preparing a baby's feed • Applying contact lenses	• Visiting the toilet or changing a nappy • Handling raw food (e.g. meat, poultry and eggs) • Touching animals or their associated equipment • Contact with blood or body fluids (including after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose) • Touching a contaminated surface (e.g. a cleaning cloth, used tissue, nappy or potty) • Outdoor activities (e.g. gardening)	• Dressing a wound • Giving or applying any medication

For more tips on how to keep yourself and your family healthy visit **www.dettol.co.uk**.

How to wash your hands

Sharing towels can pass germs from one child to another. In school, your child should use disposable paper towels or a hand dryer to dry their hands thoroughly.

Using a hand sanitiser

Using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser can be an effective and convenient alternative to soap and water. These are particularly useful for destroying germs on visibly clean hands when soap and running water are not available and as an added precaution during outbreaks of infection. It may be necessary for your child to use a hand sanitiser (under adult supervision), for example on a school trip, so do show your child how to use a hand sanitiser. Show them how to rub a small amount of sanitiser onto every part of their hands until their hands are dry, and explain that a hand sanitiser will only work properly if their hands are visibly clean.

Using toilets

Using the school toilets for the first time can be daunting. The appearance of urinals, lack of privacy and the level of cleanliness can be so off-putting that children try to wait until they get home. For some, this leads to accidents and other problems such as constipation. Some children even avoid drinking at school so that they don't have to use the toilets, which can cause dehydration.

In 2003, a survey of 56 primary school washrooms showed that 25% did not have any soap available, 23% had no towels and 12% did not have any toilet paper.[1] A more recent survey shows that schools are now more aware of the effect that poor school toilets have on children.[2] However, more needs to be done to raise standards. If you are concerned about any aspect of the toilets at your child's school, speak to the head teacher. They should be able to address any problems.

You can help your child to cope by:

- teaching them how to tell their teacher when they need to use the toilet, and making sure that the words they use are phrases their teacher will understand
- helping them to be confident enough to ask for help when they need it
- putting them in clothing that they can easily undo and refasten (elastic waists and Velcro can make life easier)
- practising how to undo and refasten clothing
- making sure they can wipe their own bottom
- ensuring they know that they should wash their hands after using the toilet
- providing spare clothing in case of accidents
- discussing any special needs with the school.

Do read the school's continence policy. This will explain what action staff will take if your child wets or soils themselves. You may need to sign forms giving staff prior consent to change soiled clothing. If your child has ongoing continence problems, you may need to agree a written healthcare plan with the school. ERIC, the children's continence charity, provides advice at **www.eric.org.uk**.

Don't worry too much if your child has problems with practical skills. Reception class teachers are used to helping children in the early days.

To help keep your child well, teach them to put the toilet lid down before flushing the toilet. This helps stop germs from the toilet splashing onto them and nearby surfaces. Show them how to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after using the toilet. Germs on unwashed hands can easily spread to other places and people.

Coughs and sneezes...

...do spread diseases, so make sure your child is equipped with tissues and knows how to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and put their used tissues in a bin to prevent the germs spreading to others. Germs that cause colds, flu and other infections spread easily on hands, so encourage your child to wash their hands thoroughly after contact with nasal secretions and tissues.

Teach your child to use the crook of their elbow to catch a sneeze when they can't get a tissue in time.

Looking after clothes

Changing into and out of school clothes, gym kits and swimwear can be difficult for a child, but is one of the things that you can help them practise before they start school. Teach them how to hang their things up and not leave them on the floor. Labelling their things with their name can help stop them straying too far. Before term starts, show your child that you have labelled their school clothes, and encourage them to start taking responsibility for their belongings.

When your child starts school, make sure they know that they need to bring any used gym kit and dirty clothes home so that you can launder them. Germs and odours soon build up in clothes, so you need to launder them regularly. It can make life easier if you choose clothes that will withstand a hot machine-wash (at least 60ºC).

Involve your child in choosing the clothes and equipment they need for school, and encourage them to help get their things ready the night before.

Safety issues

Sun protection

Strong sunlight can burn young skin. This can be painful and increases the risk of skin cancer later in life. It is a good idea to provide your child with a broad-brimmed sunhat to wear in hot weather and clothing that protects their shoulders. You may need to supply your child with sunscreen too. A broad-spectrum sunscreen, providing protection against the sun's UVB and UVA rays, is best. The sun protection factor (SPF) indicates the level of UVB protection. The star rating, which ranges from nought to five, indicates the level of UVA protection. Choose a sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (at least SPF 15) and a four or five-star rating.[3]

If you have concerns about your child's exposure to the sun during the school day, talk to your child's teacher.

Road safety

Although your child is too young to start walking to school without supervision, you can begin to teach them the right way to cross the road by always crossing the road safely yourself and explaining what you are doing. Hold your child's hand when you are near traffic, or get them to hold onto the pushchair if you are using one, and ensure your child walks on the side of the pavement furthest from the traffic. Take extra care on dark winter days to make your child clearly visible to motorists by using fluorescent or reflective clothing.

The Department for Transport's *Think! Education* website at **http://think.direct.gov.uk/education/early-years-and-primary/** provides lots of useful road safety advice for parents and children.

Every week, about 27 children aged 0-11 years are killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads.[4]

Strangers

Parents often tell their children not to talk to strangers, yet a child's perception of who is a stranger can be very different to your own. Although abduction is very rare, it is sensible to teach children:

- not to go with anyone (even someone they know well) without first telling you or the person who is looking after them
- if someone they do not know tries to take them away, it is okay to kick and scream loudly
- they should tell you if someone approaches them that they do not know
- they can talk to you about anything and you will always love them
- what to do if they are lost
- who they can go to for help if they cannot find you, e.g. police or teachers. See *Safer Strangers, Safer Buildings* at **www.childseyemedia.com** for useful resources.

Teach your child to speak up and not be afraid to ask adults for help. Help them to do this by getting them to ask assistants for items when shopping.

Travelling to and from school

Children who travel by car must use a child restraint (i.e. car seat, booster seat or booster cushion) that is appropriate for their height and weight.[4] If your child is going to travel to school by taxi or bus, ensure they know how to fasten the seatbelt (where provided) and check with the school about their arrangements to ensure they escort your child to the correct vehicle at the end of the school day.

The school may have 'walking bus' arrangements which you can join instead of using your car for a short journey. Children should be encouraged to walk as much as possible and whenever it is safe.

The school should have a procedure for collecting children from school that you should follow. However, each teacher may have up to 30 children to despatch home each day, so do make sure your child and their teacher are aware of who has permission to collect them and the arrangements for each day.

Your local authority may provide free transport if your child's primary school is more than 2 miles away, if there's no safe walking route, or if your child is unable to walk.[5] Find out if your child is eligible at **www.gov.uk**.

A healthy lunch

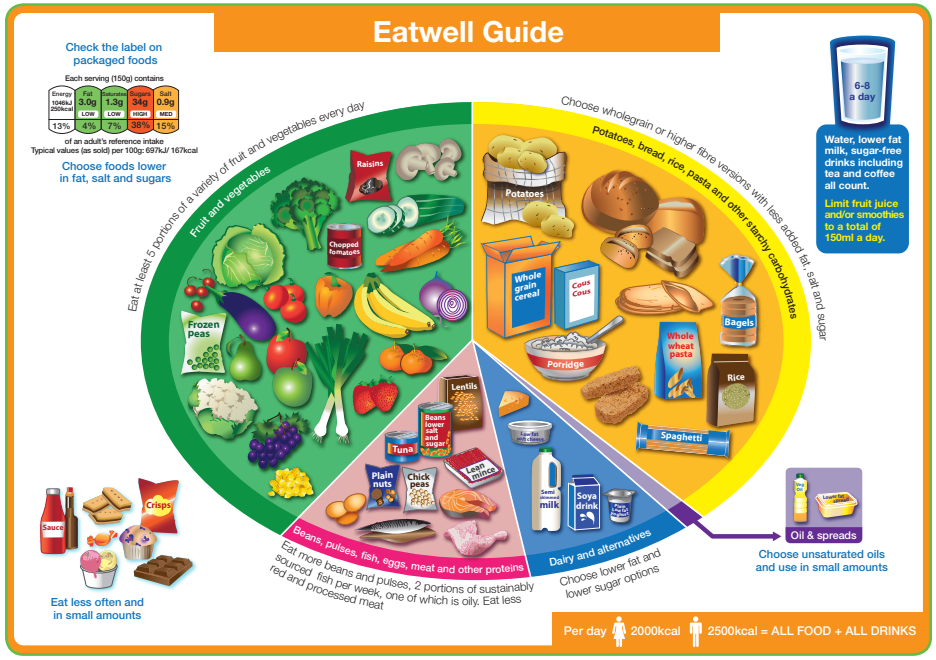
Providing a varied and balanced diet is an important way to protect your child's health and promote proper growth and development. The correct diet can aid your child's concentration and help them reach their full potential. It will also help to prevent health problems such as anaemia and dental decay, and help their immune system to fight infections.

A balanced diet is one that provides a wide variety of foods from each of the main food groups (in the proportions shown below) whilst minimising the amount of fatty and sugary foods consumed.[6] Food and drinks high in fat or sugar, such as chocolate, crisps, cakes and biscuits, are not essential to health, and eating too much of these foods can lead to obesity, dental decay and heart disease.

Some children consume too much fat and salt and have sugary foods and drinks too often. Some do not get the right amounts of vitamins and minerals because their diet lacks fruit and vegetables.

The Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



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Do help your child to eat healthily by:

- setting a good example yourself
- encouraging them to make healthy choices and try a wide variety of foods
- providing nutritious, balanced meals
- not giving them sugary foods, such as sweets and fizzy drinks to take into school
- replacing sugary snacks with fresh fruit, vegetables, unsalted nuts, seeds, milk or water.

> Your child should eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day.[6]

Every child must have access to a meal at lunchtime. You may provide your child with a packed lunch or let them eat a school lunch. All Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in state-funded schools in England are eligible for free school lunches.

> If you receive benefits, you should complete a free school meals application as it will allow the school to unlock additional funding to support your child (pupil premium). You can complete the application online at **https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals**.[7] Alternatively, ask the head teacher or school secretary.

To prepare your child for lunchtime at school:

- Talk to them about what will happen.
- Look at the school's menu and encourage your child to think about what they might choose to eat each day.
- Make sure they have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Encourage them to wash their hands before eating.
- Check they can open their lunch box and flask or water bottle.
- Get them into the habit of sitting at a table to eat and try to make meal times enjoyable, social occasions.
- Practise using a knife and fork at home.
- Encourage them to clear their own plates from the table.
- If they have a food allergy, make sure they know how to avoid and refuse food that may be unsafe for them.

School meals

All food provided in school, including lunch, breakfast, mid-morning snacks, and food available from school tuck shops, vending machines and at after-school clubs, must comply with the school food regulations.[8] These regulations help ensure a balanced diet by providing food from each of the main food groups every day, and restricting the amount of fatty and sugary foods. The regulations encourage school caterers to provide a selection of foods that over the week reflect the correct proportions of the main food groups, and reinforce healthy eating messages. The school's policy on food and supervision at lunchtime should be available for you to see.

If your child has specific dietary requirements, e.g. due to a food allergy, intolerance, a religious requirement or other reason, discuss these with the school to ensure that they can provide suitable balanced meals. A home-packed meal may be advisable in some cases.

If your child has a food allergy, discuss this with the school before term starts and include any required action in a written healthcare plan.[9]

Packed lunches

Packed lunches should provide a balanced diet too. However, packed lunches often fail to meet the same standards as school meals. A national survey found that children's lunch boxes typically contained too much fat, salt and sugar, and 42% did not include any fruit or vegetables.[10]

Children should not have sweets and sugary drinks in their lunchboxes.

When preparing a packed lunch, try to provide foods in the correct proportions and vary the contents every day. As well as being more interesting, a varied diet is important to give your child all the nutrients they need to grow and stay healthy. The school may have a policy which tells you which foods are encouraged, and those that are not allowed. The Children's Food Trust website at **http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/** provides useful tips and healthy packed lunch menus to help you.[11] The school nurse may also be able to give you tips on preparing a healthy packed lunch.

Water is a healthier choice than soft drinks that can be high in sugar, sweeteners, additives and even caffeine.

Food safety

As well as ensuring your child's packed lunch is nutritious and tasty, you also need to ensure that the food you provide is safe. Children are more vulnerable to food poisoning than adults, and lunch boxes can provide germs with all the warmth, moisture and food they need to multiply. So, take extra care when preparing and storing your child's lunch to reduce the risk of tummy upsets.

- Wash and dry your hands before you start.
- Clean and disinfect the kitchen work surfaces.
- Use an airtight, rigid lunch box that you wash and dry before and after use.
- Check all food is within its use-by or best-before date.
- Prepare ready-to-eat and cooked foods separately from raw foods, i.e. use separate chopping boards and knives.
- Wash fruit, salad and vegetables thoroughly – especially if they will be eaten raw.
- Freshly prepare food each day – less storage time gives less opportunity for germs to grow.
- If you have to store packed lunches overnight, check labels to ensure you store foods at the right temperature.
- Check that your child can store their food somewhere cool until lunchtime.
- Consider using a freezer pack or cool bag to keep your child's lunch chilled.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before opening their lunch box.
- Discourage your child from sharing the contents of their lunch box.

Drinking water

Plenty of drinking water is important. Even slight dehydration can lead to poor concentration, tiredness, irritability and headaches. Despite the availability of free, fresh drinking water throughout the school day, some children drink little or no water at school. To encourage your child to drink, you may wish to provide them with water in a bottle that is clearly labelled with their name. Make sure you clean and rinse containers (including lids and cups) thoroughly before and after use.

When you first visit the school, show your child how to use the water fountain or where to obtain drinking water.

Medication and illness

Immunisation is an effective way to protect your child from some serious and sometimes fatal infections.[12] Visit NHS Choices at **www.nhs.uk** to check which vaccinations are routinely offered as part of the childhood immunisation programme or ask your GP, practice nurse or health visitor which vaccinations your child needs before they start school. If your child has missed any of their vaccinations, or if you have any other concerns about their health, speak to your GP, practice nurse or health visitor.

Vaccines can protect children against specific forms of meningitis, but they don't protect against all forms of this disease. Learn the symptoms (see **www.meningitisnow.org**) and get medical help quickly if you suspect meningitis.

If you have not already done so, register your child with a dentist and organise regular check-ups (at least once a year). The NHS provides free dental treatment for all children. The NHS also provides free sight tests for children. Children should have their eyes tested regularly, normally at least every two years, or more often if the ophthalmic practitioner (optician) advises this. If you have any concerns about your child's vision, make an appointment for a sight test as soon as possible.

The School Health Service

School nurses may meet parents of new pupils at welcome evenings organised by the school, but you can ask to see the school nurse at other times. The school nurse will usually offer you a health check for your child within your child's first year of schooling. This usually involves checking your child's height and weight, vision and hearing. The nurse may ask you to fill in a questionnaire and invite you to come and talk to them about your child's needs.

The school nurse can advise on support for children with health problems and special needs. They have links with health visitors who may discuss your child's health needs with the school nurse. The school nurse also provides links to specialists, such as speech therapists who help children with communication difficulties, and educational psychologists who help when there are concerns about development, learning or behaviour. The school may also have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) whose role involves supporting children who have learning difficulties or disabilities such as problems with sight or hearing that make learning more difficult.

Seek advice from the school nurse if you need support to manage your child's health whilst they are in school.

Children with medical needs

Many children have long-term medical conditions (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes or an allergy) that require ongoing support from the school. Schools should have a written policy for supporting these children and managing their medication.[9] This policy should be published on the school's website.

As a parent or guardian, you have ultimate responsibility for your child's health and must provide the school with information about your child's medical conditions and needs. You will need to reach agreement on the school's role in helping with your child's needs, and approve a written healthcare plan to clarify the arrangements. You must review this plan regularly and notify the school promptly of any changes.[9]

If your child has a long-term medical condition, contact the school before term starts to discuss and agree how this can be managed.

Medication

Medicines should only be taken to school when absolutely essential. If your child requires medication, ask your doctor whether they can prescribe it in dose frequencies that allow your child to take it outside school hours (e.g. before and after school, and at bedtime). If your child has to take medicines during school, you should agree a healthcare plan with the head teacher or other designated member of staff.[9] Medicines usually have to be stored safely away from children. However, schools should allow children to carry certain medicines and equipment that need to be readily available (e.g. asthma inhalers, blood glucose monitors and adrenaline pens).

If your child has to take medicines during the school day, ask the pharmacist to provide this dose in a container that is properly labelled with instructions for dosage, administration and storage in school. This prevents the need to carry medicines back and forth every day. Medicines should always be kept in their original containers (except insulin which is generally provided in an insulin pen or pump).[9]

If your child needs to take any medication during the school day, you will need to discuss this with the school.

Illness and infections

If your child is ill, you will need to keep them away from school until they are well enough to return. Schools are not equipped to care for sick children and your child should only attend school if they are well enough to benefit and participate.

Visit **www.dettol.co.uk** for your guide to germs and how good hygiene can reduce the spread of many infections.

Children with some particular infections must stay away from school for a specified period.[13] For example, if your child has chickenpox they must stay away from school until all the spots have crusted over. As well as giving your child time to recover, excluding your child for an appropriate period helps to prevent others becoming ill. Not all infections are serious enough to warrant time off school however. For example, there is no need to keep your child away from school if they have a cold or head lice.[13] The table on the next page gives appropriate exclusion periods for some common infections. Your GP, practice nurse, school nurse or health visitor can also give advice on the correct treatment for a particular infection and whether you need to keep your child away from school. If the illness has implications for other children and staff at school, GPs may inform other professionals so that they can take appropriate action.

If you are concerned about your child's health and urgently need medical advice, telephone NHS 111 in England and Scotland, or 0845 46 47 in Wales.

Notifying school of absences

If your child is unable to attend school, you must telephone the school and advise them of the reason for your child's absence and when you expect your child to return. Staff will be concerned if they don't hear from you. You should try to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. If your child has to leave school during the day, you will need to inform the school in advance and follow the school's procedure for collecting and returning your child.

Make sure the school can contact you in an emergency. If your child has to go to hospital or see a doctor, staff will have to stay with them until you arrive.[9]

Exclusion periods for common infections

Infection	Exclusion period[13]
Chickenpox	Until all the spots have crusted over.
Colds	Exclusion is not necessary.
Conjunctivitis	Exclusion is not necessary.
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. Further exclusion may be required in some cases. Children with cryptosporidiosis shouldn't swim for 2 weeks after having diarrhoea.
Flu	Until recovered.
Glandular fever	Exclusion is not necessary.
Hand, foot and mouth	Exclusion is not usually necessary.
Head lice	Exclusion is not necessary. Treatment is recommended only if live lice are definitely seen. Close contacts should also be checked and treated if live lice are found. Parents should regularly check their child's hair for lice using a detection comb.
Hepatitis A	Until 7 days after onset of jaundice (or other symptoms in no jaundice).
Impetigo	Until the lesions are crusted or healed, or 48 hours after commencing antibiotics.
Measles	For 4 days after the rash appears.
Mumps	For 5 days after the onset of swelling.
Ringworm	Treatment (available from a pharmacist) is required, but exclusion is not usually necessary.
Rubella (German measles)	For 4 days after the rash appears.
Scabies	Until after the first treatment. The rest of the household and any other close contacts must also be treated.
Scarlet fever	Until 24 hours after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment.
Shingles	Exclusion is only necessary if the rash is weeping and it can't be covered.
Slapped cheek syndrome	Exclusion is not necessary.
Threadworms	Exclusion is not necessary but treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts.
Tuberculosis (TB)	Seek advice from your child's GP.
Warts and verrucae	Exclusion is not necessary, but keep verrucae covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms.
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Until 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment is prescribed.

Controlling germs at home

Although a warm welcome home is important for your child, you don't want to welcome home the germs they pick up during their day as well. If you can, get your child into a routine of taking off their outdoor shoes, hanging up their coat, dealing with any dirty laundry and then washing their hands thoroughly, especially before they handle any food.

Good hygiene at home is important because it helps to prevent your child from picking up an infection at home and missing school through illness. It also reduces the risk of germs spreading round your home and making other family members ill. You can help keep your child, yourself and the rest of your family healthy by encouraging all family members to adhere to the following good personal and home hygiene advice.[14]

> Different infections spread in different ways, e.g. through the air, by eating contaminated food or by touching people, animals, surfaces or objects.

Personal hygiene

Your hands are one of the main ways infections spread. Every time you touch something, germs can transfer to your hands and then pass into your body when you touch your eyes, nose or mouth, or a wound, or eat without washing your hands first. The germs can also spread to other people and places that you touch.

> Learn more about personal hygiene at **www.dettol.co.uk**.

To stay protected, make sure that everyone in your family washes their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:

- before touching food or eating
- before handling sterilised equipment or preparing a baby's feed
- before applying contact lenses
- after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- immediately after touching raw food, such as meat, poultry, fish or eggs
- after touching animals or their associated equipment
- after contact with blood or body fluids (e.g. faeces, vomit or nasal secretions)
- after touching anything dirty (e.g. drains, cleaning cloths, bins or dirty shoes)
- after outdoor activities such as gardening
- before and after dressing a wound or giving or applying any medication
- whenever hands look dirty.

> If you can't get to a sink, you can use an alcohol-based sanitiser to help destroy the germs on visibly clean hands.

Here are some other ways you and your family can help reduce infection risks and stay healthy.

- Have a bath or shower every day if possible to help remove the germs and stale sweat that cause body odour.
- Brush your teeth twice a day, including just before you go to bed to remove the germs and plaque that cause tooth decay.
- Wash and comb or brush your hair regularly.
- Check children's hair regularly for head lice using a fine-toothed lice comb.
- Keep nails short and clean.
- Change socks, tights and underclothes daily.
- Regularly change and launder all clothing.
- Regularly launder towels, flannels and bed linen.
- Use tissues to wipe your nose and to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Put your used tissues in a bin and wash your hands afterwards.
- Never spit.
- Keep cuts and abrasions clean and covered.

> Establish regular routines for your child's personal hygiene and supervise them until they learn to carry out each task properly on their own.

Cleaning cloths and cleaning utensils

Germs can multiply quickly on damp cleaning cloths and cleaning utensils. You could spread germs all around your home by reusing them. Using disposable cloths, wipes or paper towels helps to reduce the risks. If you must reuse cloths, you will need to destroy the germs on them after every use, and at least once a day, by rinsing them in detergent and hot water and then either:

- putting them through the dishwasher or washing machine on a hot wash (at least 60°C)
- immersing them in boiling water for 2 minutes, or
- soaking them in a suitable disinfectant and then rinsing them with clean water.

If you use a mop, ideally it should have a detachable head that you can machine-wash after use. If it doesn't have a detachable head, clean the mop with detergent and hot water, rinse it with disinfectant and then wring it as dry as possible.

> Don't use the same cloth to clean the bathroom and the kitchen.

In the kitchen

It may be surprising to know that most food poisoning results from food prepared at home. Germs that cause these stomach infections can be found in:

- raw food, including uncooked meat, poultry, eggs, fish and seafood
- unpasteurised milk and dairy products
- unwashed salad, fruit and vegetables
- soil, faeces, untreated water, dust and insects.

The germs can spread around your home and from person to person, via unwashed hands, food preparation surfaces (e.g. chopping boards), insects and other animals. Thorough hand washing and good surface hygiene will help you to destroy the germs and reduce the risk of food poisoning.

- Wash and dry your hands before preparing food and immediately after handling raw food (especially poultry).
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that people often touch, such as doorknobs, handles, taps and bins.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces immediately before preparing food.
- After touching raw food, clean and disinfect food contact surfaces and any surface you may have touched (e.g. refrigerator handle, tap).
- Use disposable cleaning cloths or wipes to clean kitchen surfaces if possible.
- Empty, clean and disinfect bins regularly.
- Regularly remove food debris from inside fridges, microwaves and cupboards, and then disinfect the surfaces.
- Keep dirty nappies, laundry, pets, insects and other pests away from your food and kitchen surfaces.

> **i** Germs multiply quickly in moist environments such as food left to stand at room temperature, and in damp cleaning cloths.

Food hygiene

- Wash salads, fruits and vegetables to remove all traces of dirt and insects.
- Avoid contact between raw and ready-to-eat foods (e.g. by using separate knives and chopping boards, and storing raw meat at the bottom of the fridge).
- Cook food thoroughly and evenly (particularly poultry).
- Eat cooked food immediately or cool and refrigerate it promptly (within 1 to 2 hours).
- Never reheat food more than once.
- Do not refreeze food that has defrosted.
- Check use-by dates on food (even tinned foods have an expiry date) and discard any food that has expired or deteriorated.
- Keep your refrigerator at or below 5°C. Chilling food helps slow the growth of germs.
- Keep freezers at or below minus 18°C. Germs cannot multiply in frozen food.

> **i** Avoid preparing food for others if you are unwell, particularly if you have a stomach upset.

Laundry

Laundering clothes, towels and linens at high temperatures (at least 60°C) will destroy most germs. However, some fabrics are temperature-sensitive, so always check the washing instructions. If you cannot wash a fabric at a high temperature, you may need to use a suitable laundry disinfectant.

- Use cleaning products that remove dirt and stains (e.g. blood) which can harbour germs.
- Before laundering very dirty items (e.g. soiled underwear) put any solid waste into the toilet, not the sink.
- Don't rinse dirty laundry in the sink; use the pre-wash cycle followed by a hot wash.
- When laundering at less than 60°C, consider using a laundry disinfectant to help kill germs.
- Keep dirty laundry away from food preparation areas.
- Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
- Dry your clean laundry as soon as you can. Germs and odours soon build up in damp washing.

> **i** Encourage your child to put their dirty clothes into the laundry basket.

In the bathroom

In the bathroom, the surfaces that are most likely to be involved in spreading germs from one person to another are those that are often touched by hands, such as the toilet flush, the toilet seat, taps and door handles. You can destroy the germs on these surfaces and reduce the risk of infection by cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces regularly.

The risk of germs spreading from the toilet bowl is usually quite low in a healthy household. However, germs from the toilet can find their way onto other surfaces in your bathroom, especially if you leave the toilet lid open during flushing. To prevent germs and odours building up, you need to regularly clean the toilet bowl and beneath the rim using a toilet brush and a cleaning product that removes scale. It's best to use a disinfectant to help destroy the germs in your toilet if someone has vomiting or diarrhoea, or if a particularly vulnerable person, such as a young child, is present in your home.

- Regularly clean and disinfect the toilet bowl to remove dirt and germs.
- Close the toilet lid before flushing the toilet.
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that hands often touch.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet and after cleaning the bathroom.
- Rinse baths, sinks and showers after use and clean them regularly with a product that removes soap scum and scale.
- Regularly clean shower curtains with a suitable disinfectant or launder them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Run hot water through your showerhead on full power for a minute or two to help flush germs away, if it hasn't been used for a period of time.
- Keep your bathroom clean and well ventilated to help stop mould growing.
- Never share personal items such as toothbrushes, flannels and razors.
- Rinse toothbrushes after use and store them where germs are unlikely to splash onto them (away from the toilet).
- Launder and replace towels and flannels frequently.
- Encourage children to hang towels up after use, so that they dry quickly.

> **i** If someone is unwell, clean and disinfect hand-contact surfaces more frequently.

Floors, furniture and other surfaces

The risk of picking up an infection from surfaces such as floors and furniture is usually low. You should clean all surfaces regularly to remove dirt, dust, mites, insects and visible mould, but you only need to worry about destroying germs on these surfaces if they are soiled with blood or body fluids (e.g. vomit, faeces) or if a young child is around.

- Keep all surfaces as clean and dry as possible.
- Regularly vacuum floors and soft furnishings, and damp-dust hard furniture.
- Remove any spills of blood or body fluids promptly using paper towels, then clean the soiled surface using detergent and water.
- To help destroy germs on hard surfaces (e.g. tiled walls, hard furniture, linoleum flooring) apply a suitable disinfectant.
- To help destroy germs on carpets and soft furnishings, steam clean them.
- Use a disinfectant regularly on hard floors where young children play or crawl.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning.

> **i** Hard floors are easier to clean and don't accumulate as much dirt as carpets.

Toys

Toys need to be cleaned regularly. Children can pick up germs from their toys from their hands or by putting them in their mouth.

- Clean plastic and hard toys by washing them in detergent and water, before rinsing them thoroughly with clean water and drying them, or by placing them in a dishwasher.
- Launder soft toys regularly (check washing instructions first).

Spills of faeces, nasal and eye discharges, saliva, urine or vomit on hard toys should be cleaned away immediately and any contaminated surfaces disinfected. Make sure you rinse toys thoroughly with clean water after disinfecting them. Soiled soft toys should be laundered on a hot wash (at least 60°C). If a soiled toy won't withstand a hot wash you may have to throw it away.

> **i** Clean toys regularly and whenever they are visibly soiled.

Pets

Ask your vet what vaccinations and treatments your pets need to help keep them healthy.

Pets do carry germs. However, most children love animals and with sensible hygiene precautions, they can be involved in their care.

- Make sure everyone washes their hands after handling animals or their associated equipment, and after cleaning up after an animal.
- Don't let animals lick people's faces or allow your children to 'kiss' pets.
- Keep animals and their equipment out of the kitchen if possible.
- Ensure animals have their own feeding dishes that you regularly clean and disinfect.
- Regularly clean and disinfect pet housing (e.g. cages, tanks, kennels and baskets) and floors used by pets (using products suitable for this use).
- Promptly remove any soiling (e.g. dog faeces) into a plastic bag using paper towels, then clean and disinfect any contaminated surfaces.
- Empty, clean and disinfect litter trays daily.
- Cover sandpits to prevent animals soiling them.

For more advice on creating a healthy home for your family, visit **www.dettol.co.uk**.

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