



A Family Guide to Good Hygiene in the Home

Overview of Germs and Common Illnesses in Children:

- Common respiratory infections often result in coughs and colds that are relatively harmless and do not require treatment.
- When children are first exposed to germs in a group setting (e.g., child care/school), their immune systems are still developing and may take time to respond to common germs that cause infection.
- When older children first enter group settings (e.g., kids entering school who haven't been in child care), they're more likely to get frequent infections in the first few years than their classmates.



Q&A with Dr. Laura Jana *Renowned pediatrician and author*

Q: Why does my child get sick so often, especially during the school year?

A: Common colds are blamed for an estimated 22 million lost school days a year in the United States¹ and children average 6 to 10 colds a year (as compared to 2 to 4 for adults). Germs are everywhere, especially in schools, and it's impossible to avoid them. However, there are plenty of things parents can do to help keep illness-causing germs at bay and ensure children stay healthy throughout the school year.

Q: What is the best way to keep my child from getting sick?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has some great tips for preventing illness, which include:² washing hands frequently (especially after using the bathroom), using antibiotics appropriately, making sure your child is fully vaccinated, routinely cleaning and disinfecting commonly-touched surfaces and handling and preparing food safely.

Q: What can I do to keep my child from bringing germs from school into the home?

A: Germs like warm, moist places and live in body fluids, foods and on surfaces. In fact, studies have shown that germs can live on surfaces for more than two hours. Encourage your child to wash his or her hands as soon as he or she gets home from school, and clean and disinfect high-traffic areas of contamination (such as door handles, toilets, faucets and tables). Teach your child healthy habits for the classroom and give them supplies such as sanitizers, tissues and disinfecting wipes (check with your child's teacher first). Also, don't forget to take your child for routine immunizations, including the annual flu vaccine.

Q: How do I know if my child is sick enough to be kept home from school?

A: Make sure you are familiar with school policies regarding when children need to be sent or kept home from school due to illness. If your school doesn't have a policy, refer to the American Academy of Pediatrics' three key criteria for exclusion of ill children from the school setting:³ 1) when a child isn't able to participate comfortably in activities, 2) when a child requires more care than a teacher can reasonably offer, and 3) when a child poses a risk of spreading harmful diseases.

Q: If my child does get sick, is there anything I can do to prevent the rest of my family from getting sick too?

A: Whenever you have a sick child at home, it's a good idea to avoid direct contact with your child's mucus, saliva or other body fluids. Also, make sure you (and others) wash your hands with soap and water after direct contact with your sick child or his/her germs, avoid sharing cups or eating utensils, and disinfect any potentially contaminated surfaces.

Visit www.lysol.com/schools and www.cdc.gov for more information on preventing germs in the home and the classroom

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vital Health and Statistics Current Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 1996.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ounce of Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/ounceofprevention/docs/ooop_poster_eng.pdf

³ Aronson, Susan S., American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools. September 2008.