

Rub a Dub...Let's Scrub A Few Tips on Hand Washing

Hand washing is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection in your home. Your care provider is working to encourage your child to learn this very important habit. Here is the routine followed while your child is in her care. Your child may sing a song while washing her hands. This helps children wash for the recommended 10 seconds.

- Use soap and warm running water.
- Wet hands and add soap.
- Rub hands vigorously for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces, including the backs of hands and between fingers.
- Rinse hands well under running water for 10 seconds.
- Dry hands well with a paper towel.
- Turn off the taps with the paper towel.
- Dispose of the paper towel.
- Apply hand lotion, as needed.
- Together, you and your child's care provider can help cut down on the risk of infection and start healthy habits for life.

Parents,

This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org



Lead Awareness and Your Child

Almost 890,000 children in America have elevated levels of lead in their blood, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

How can lead affect your child's health?

The long term effects of lead in a child can be severe. They include:

- Mental retardation
- Learning disabilities
- Decreased growth
- Hyperactivity
- Impaired hearing
- Reduced attention span

Where can lead be found?

You may have lead around your building without knowing it because *you can't see, taste, or smell lead*. Lead sources include:

- Cracking and peeling lead-based paint in homes built before 1978.
- Soil in yards, playgrounds, gardens, near lead painted buildings, or busy streets.
- Dust and plaster created by renovation in homes that contain lead.
- Some toys, imported crayons, and antique furniture that contain lead-based paint.
- Lead-glazed ceramics, pottery, or lead crystal. Do not serve or store acidic beverages and food such as coffee, tea, juices, and fruits in these containers.
- Lead dust from vinyl mini blinds.

How can lead poisoning be prevented?

If caught early, the effects of lead poisoning can be limited by reducing exposure to lead or by medical treatment. If you are pregnant, avoid exposing yourself to lead. Lead can pass through your body to your baby. There are simple things you can do to help protect your family. Get your child tested. Even if he or she seems healthy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following:

- Children should be tested for the first time when they are 1 year old, or at 6 months if the home has lead in it or if you live in an older building.
- Children older than 1 year should have a blood lead test at least every year if your house or apartment contains lead paint or if you use lead in your job or hobby.

Ordinary dust and dirt may contain lead. Remember to do the following:

- Keep the areas where your children play as dust-free and clean as possible.
- Wash pacifiers and bottles after they fall on the floor. Keep extras on hand.
- Mop floors and wipe window ledges and chewable surfaces such as cribs with a general all-purpose cleaner in warm water. Do this once each week.
- Wash toys and stuffed animals regularly.
- Make sure your children wash their hands before meals, nap time, and bed time.

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When is my Child too Sick to be in Care?

There are times when your child may have an infection that poses a risk to others. It is at this time that you and the care provider need to use careful judgement and decide whether or not to keep your child home. If your child is cared for by a regulated care provider, remember she must follow the state guidelines for excluding a child from care. The following are a few suggested criteria the American Academy of Pediatrics uses for care settings.

Your child should not be in a care setting if she has:

- An illness that prevents her from comfortably participating in program activities.
- An illness that results in a greater need for care than what the care provider can give without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- A fever, is lethargic, irritable, persistently cries, has difficulty breathing, or manifests other symptoms of possible severe illness.
- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus.
- Vomited two or more times in 24 hours, unless vomiting is determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and she is not in danger of dehydration.
- A rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.

- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye). She should remain at home until examined by a health care provider and is approved for readmission, with treatment.
- Strep throat. She should remain at home for 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice. She should remain home until after the first treatment.
- Scabies; your child should remain home until after the first or complete treatment has been given.
- Chickenpox. She should remain home until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).

Your child and care provider will get sick. Be sure you have a back up care plan for your child if she or her care provider gets ill. Planning in advance will prevent a crisis later.

Because your child is in group care, she may get more colds or mild illnesses. The Center for Disease Control states, "With the possible exception of immunizations, hand washing is the most effective disease-preventing measure anyone can practice. Immunizations, breastfeeding, hand washing, and good sanitation and hygiene practices will help ensure the health of children, parents, and care providers".

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