



▶ WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL 1

▶ CLEAN HANDS, HEALTHY BODY 2

▶ HOLIDAY STRESS 2

CONNECTING Education & Health 4 → our future Newsletter

This publication is brought to you through cooperative efforts of the following agencies: Hancock County Health Department, Memorial Hospital, Mental Health Centers of Western Illinois and U of I Extension Center

When to Keep Your Child Home from School

By: Shelly Hunter, RN, Infection Preventionist @ Memorial Hospital

Parents have to ask their selves this question on a regular basis: When do I keep my child home from school? This can create a very difficult situation for families as it can result in missed work for parents and a load of homework for the student. Of course, we all want to do what is best for our family. And we also have to consider the other students...and their families. Kids spread germs. It just happens. We can't change it. But we can do our best to keep our germs at home.

So let's take a look at what are absolute "stay at home" situations and what are your judgment calls.

* Absolutely stay at home for: *

- Fever—a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Keep your child home until they are fever free for 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea—Keep your child home until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- Severe pain—severe pain is not normal in children; your child

should be seen by a physician.

- Any contagious illness such as the flu or pinkeye; keep them home until they are no longer infectious. With pinkeye the child can return after 24 hours of treatment.
- Severe cough and cold—if the cough and cold symptoms are severe ask yourself if the child will be able to participate in class. If the answer is no, keep them home.
- Rash—Rash can be a sign of contagious conditions. Children should stay at home until they have a diagnosis or the symptoms are gone.

Judgment calls

- Sore throat. Sore throat can be a sign of a simple cold or strep throat. If your child is diagnosed with strep throat they need to remain at home until they have had 24 hours of antibiotics. It is okay to go to school with a mild cold.

- Headaches—if your child does not have any other signs or symptoms suggesting illness and feels well enough to concentrate they can go to school.
- Earaches—This is not a contagious illness. Children can go to school as long as they feel well enough to concentrate.
- Mild cold symptoms. Children can go to school as long as the nasal drainage is clear and the cough is mild.

ANYTIME YOU HAVE A DOUBT, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER!!!

FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS! IF YOU FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT WITH YOUR CHILD,

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS!



FUN FACTS

Six U.S. presidents had no children. Then there was President John Tyler. He had 15 children!! Before he became president, Millard Fillmore was vice president to Zachary Taylor. But he and Taylor never met until after they were elected.

Stress and the Holidays

By Jessica Boyle, Executive Assistant, Mental Health Centers of Western Illinois

The holiday season is quickly approaching. Regardless of what the holiday is named or what traditions are associated with it, any of you can experience conflicting feelings of excitement and anticipation or anxiety and frustration. With some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays.

Sometimes you don't take the time to decide what is truly important to you during the holiday season. Sit down and identify what makes you feel good and what stresses you out about the holidays. Then choose to do more activities that make you feel good. You may become so busy with gift giving and social activities that you don't have time for yourself. It is important to take time for yourself to recharge and actually have more energy to accomplish your goals.

Planning ahead and making a budget can help minimize holiday pressures. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Decide how much money you can afford to spend on gift and food shopping. It can be easy to overspend during the holidays because you

want to meet your children's gift expectations and have fun, but you have to set limits and stick to them. To help your children understand the meaning of the holiday, plan an event that focuses on giving instead of receiving.

It is important to acknowledge your feelings and reach out for help if you are feeling lonely or isolated. You may be dealing with death, divorce or distance of family members. You can't force yourself to be happy, but your family and community resources can offer support and companionship to help you through a difficult time. If you need it, seek professional help to help you deal with the stress.

Remember, the holidays don't have to be perfect or exactly like last year. Be realistic about what you can actually get done and about your traditions and rituals. Families change and grow, meaning your traditions may not always be the same from year to year. Be open to creating new traditions that could reduce stress and make your holiday season an enjoyable one!

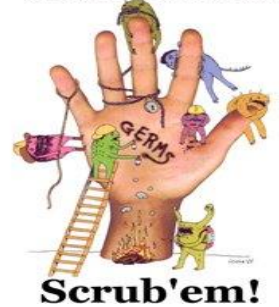
###



CLEAN HANDS, HEALTHY BODY

By Melita A. Finney, Community Health Director, Hancock County Health Department

Germ Farm



As you touch people, surfaces and objects throughout the day, you accumulate germs on your hands. In turn, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Although it's impossible to keep your hands germ-free, keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps our families can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. According to the Center for Disease Control, if soap and clean water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

Being a good role model and encouraging children to follow good hygiene practices are extremely important for their health and safety. Encourage them to always wash hands before: preparing food or eating, taking medicine, or caring for a sick or injured person, and inserting or removing contact lenses.

Furthermore, convince them to always wash hands after: preparing food, especially raw meat or poultry, using the toilet or changing a diaper, touching an animal or animal toys, leashes, or waste, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands, treating wounds or caring for a sick or injured person, handling garbage, household or garden chemicals, or anything that could be contaminated — such as cleaning clothes or soiled shoes. In addition, hands should always be washed whenever they look dirty.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. According to Mayo Clinic, it may be necessary to wash your hands with your child to show him or her how it's done. Follow these simple steps when washing hands; wet your hands with running water, apply liquid, bar or powder soap, lather well, rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Remember to scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails. Next, rinse well and dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel or air dryer. If possible, use your towel to turn off the faucet. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty. Hand sanitizers can be used by applying the product to the palm of one hand, rub hands and fingers together until your hands feel dry.

Hand-washing doesn't take much time or effort, but it offers great rewards in terms of preventing illness. Adopting this simple habit in your family can play a major role in protecting you and your children's health. For more information visit www.cdc.gov or contact the Hancock County Health Department at 217-357-2171.