



Family Information

Healthy Bodies

Staying Healthy

Why are my kids always sick?

On average, children suffer from ten or more colds each year. No wonder it seems they are always sick! Adults have a mature immune system, which can fight off more germs. Children, however, do not have this level of immunity and are much more vulnerable to

hundreds of viruses. The positive aspect of children being exposed to viruses is part of what strengthens their immune system. So, the older a child gets, typically the less often they become ill. It also seems children become ill more often during the fall and winter months rather than spring and summer. One explanation for this is the school year. When children return to school, they spend more time indoors and have much more contact with germs from their classmates and teachers. Another theory points to the change in seasons and temperatures. Going between cold and warm causes the mucus membranes to kick into

overdrive in an attempt to keep the sinus passages at the right level of moisture. Sniffles don't cause germs, but they allow the passing of germs at a much higher and easier rate. With children, runny noses usually lead to germ hands and germ hands seem to touch everything! Since inclement weather usually puts the breaks on fresh air, germs have more 'face time' with children during the cold months than any other time of the year.



Want more tips and ideas to fight off germs and colds?

Try these websites:

www.kidshealth.org

www.cdc.gov

www.familydoctor.org

www.pbs.org/parents

How can I cut down on colds?

Here are some suggestions to help keep your child and family healthy throughout the year.

***Wash those hands!** Proper hand washing is estimated to cut down on over fifty percent of absenteeism due to illness. Approximately

forty percent of cases for diarrhea alone are caused by bacteria transferred by un-washed hands. ***Don't touch your face!** Teach your children to keep hands away from the face, specifically the eyes, nose and mouth. ***Cover your mouth!** When sneezing or coughing, do so into the crook of your elbow rather than your hands. This helps cut down on transmitting germs. ***Stay home!** If you or a family member becomes ill, do not expose others to those germs. The majority of return to work or school policies are specifically written to prevent other people from being exposed while giving the person who is ill plenty of time to recuperate.

***Disinfect!** There are many sprays and cleaning agents that help minimize germs. Boiling water is a way to disinfect without using chemicals. Doctors also recommend replacing toothbrushes often, especially after recovering from an illness. ***Don't Smoke, Don't Drink in Excess, Don't Get Too Warm Out!** These behaviors, along with exposure to second hand smoke, can lower immune systems.

***Vitamins!** Many doctors recommend a vitamin supplement as early as the first birthday! Multivitamins can help by boosting the immune

system. Vitamin C is crucial for a healthy body. Zinc can reduce sore throat symptoms. Vitamins A and D can reduce earaches and infections. ***Get Plenty of Sleep, Exercise, Eat Healthy, Drink Plenty of Water, and Take Care of Yourself!**

