

# FitFUTURE

Strategies for  
Better Living.

## Keep Your Family Healthy During the Cold and Flu Season

by Susan Figaro Grace, MEd, RD, CWC

### Washing Hands Prevents Illness

Washing your hands is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria. Proper hand washing may eliminate nearly half of all cases of foodborne illness and significantly reduces the spread of the common cold and flu.

#### 5 Steps to Washing Hands

- 1 Turn on the faucet to warm water.
- 2 Lather hands with soap.
- 3 Wash your hands front and back, up to your wrists and between the fingers and underneath the nails singing the chorus of Happy Birthday 2 times.
- 4 Rinse soap off your hands and then dry your hands with a clean dry cloth.
- 5 Use the cloth to turn off the faucet and open the door to the restroom.

#### Wash Hands Often

- Wash hands before, during and after handling food.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Wash hands after doing chores.

#### Additional Precautions

- Avoid touching your face to decrease the spread of germs

- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs
- Avoid close contact with sick people.

#### Hand Sanitizers

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers do NOT eliminate all types of germs.

#### Maintain Regular Sleep Routines

Both parents and their children need to maintain regular sleep patterns to insure adequate and restful sleep. The National Sleep Foundation recommends a minimum of 7-9 hours of sleep for adults and 10-11 hours of sleep for school aged children.

#### Maintaining Healthy Eating Habits

Regular well balanced meals and snacks are important to maintain a strong immune system. Colorful fruits and vegetables are cold busters as well as drinking plenty of fluids particularly water to stay hydrated and decrease the risk of infection. Take advantage of your child's school meals as they offer perfectly portioned, nutrient rich, affordable, healthy meals.

### Physical Activity and Active Play

When the temperature drops we often hibernate. It's important to remain active. Consider taking walks as a family picking up colorful leaves for a collage, participate in scavenger hunts or farm mazes, and go for bike rides or play tag.

### Be A Role Model

Parents remember your children are watching you! It is important to model the right behavior when it comes to these healthy habits.



#### LEARN MORE

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
<http://www.eatright.org>

Center for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/parents>

National Sleep Foundation  
<http://www.sleepfoundation.org>

