



Families Matter

Handwashing for Better Health

The change in routine that January brings offers the perfect opportunity to re-energize your family's good health habits. . . and frequent handwashing is a good health habit that should get special attention. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is the single most important practice that will keep us all from getting sick and spreading illness.

That's because people with colds typically carry the virus on their hands, where, unless proper handwashing intervenes, it can stay alive for at least two hours. These live viruses can also be transmitted from hands to other surfaces, such as cafeteria tables, door-knobs, telephone receivers, computer keyboards, toys, games, etc., where they lay and wait for several hours for another set of hands to pick them up. Each year, 22 million school days are lost due to the common cold. So if your family hasn't jumped on the Clean Hands Bandwagon, now

is the time to get them on board.

Critical times for handwashing include before and after meals and snacks; before and after preparing food, especially raw meat, poultry, or seafood; after using the bathroom; after touching animals; after touching a public surface; when hands are dirty; before caring for young children; and when you or someone around you is ill.

Proper Handwashing Techniques

Bar or hand soaps:

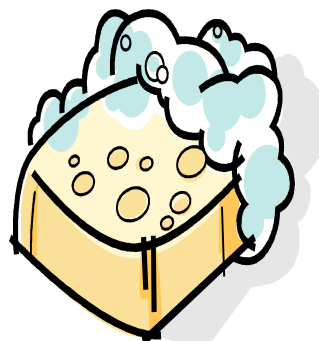
1. Wet hands with warm, running water, then apply soap.
2. Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces. Continue for 20 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice.
3. Rinse well under warm, running water.
4. Dry hands thoroughly using paper towels or an air dryer. Avoid community hand towels that are repeatedly used by eve-

ryone in the family. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Hand sanitizers: Apply one or two squirts of the product to your hands, and then rub them together briskly. Rub the front, the back, between your fingers, and around and under nails until your hands are dry.

Hand wipes: Wipe all areas of your hands until they are visibly clean. Depending on how dirty or sticky your hands are, this might require more than one wipe. When finished, dispose of the wipes in an appropriate trash container and let your hands air-dry.

Source Cleaning Matters,
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Keys to Effective Family Communication

Communicate Frequently: Talk in the car; turn the TV off and eat dinner together; schedule informal or formal family meetings to talk about important issues that affect your family; and talk to your children at bedtime. There are many creative ways to make time to communicate with other family members.

Communicate Clearly and Directly: Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., spouse, parent-child). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.

Be An Active Listener: Listen to what others are saying. Try your best to understand the point of view of the other person. Pay close attention to their verbal and

non-verbal messages. As an active listener, you must acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification if you do not understand the other family member. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said..?" or "Did I understand you correctly?" Active listening involves acknowledging and respecting the other person's point of view.

Think About the Person With Whom You Are Communicating: Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. This is especially true of young children. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwarranted assumptions. It is also important to take into consideration the ages and maturity levels of children. Parents cannot communicate with children in the

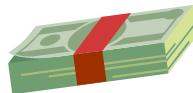
same way that they communicate with their spouse because the child may not be old enough to understand.

Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Messages: In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communicators also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expressions or body language may be telling you something completely different. In cases such as these, it is important to find out how the person is really feeling.

Be Positive: While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situations, effective communication is primarily positive. It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

Source Virginia Cooperative Extension

Money on the Bookshelf



Money On The Bookshelf is a Family Financial Literacy Program curriculum featuring a lending library of children's books containing financial literacy concepts. The program targets parents of young children ages four through ten by offering encouragement to them in reading the books at home with their children and discussing the story's financial point at the child's level of comprehension.

Parents borrow the books for specific length of time and are given a guide to use with the book at home.

Cleveland County Oklahoma Home and Community Education is interested in donating or loaning the lending libraries to pre-K, Kindergarten and early elementary classes and providing curriculum information to schools.

Alternately, OHCE would be

interested in providing trained leaders to conduct or assist in conducting the program in schools or media centers by reading to the students in a group, working with teaching visuals and the prepared accompanying guides.

If you are interested in implementing this curriculum please contact Nicole Moore at the Cleveland County Extension Center.

Taming Television

Did you know that American kids spend more time with media than they do going to school? Or that they spend more time watching TV than hanging out with family or friends, reading for fun, in physical activities, or on hobbies? It's true! A 2005 study found that 8-18 year olds spent an average of 6 1/2 hours a day watching TV or using other kinds of media like DVDs, videos, computer games, or being online. This is more than time spent hanging out with parents or friends (2 1/4 hours each), in some kind of physical activity (1 1/2 hours), pursuing a hobby or other activity (1 hour), or reading (45 minutes).



Keep the TV in a public place, like the family room. Fight the temptation to let kids have a TV in their own bedrooms. Children who have TVs in their rooms spend more time watching TV and less time reading than children who don't have their own TVs. Having the TV in view makes it easier to keep track of how much time they are spending watching TV, and what kinds of programs they are watching.

Protect family time. Turn off the TV when no one is watching, and keep it off during meals. When the TV is left on a lot (especially during meals), kids are less likely to talk about their problems with parents. Mealtimes can be a great way for busy family members to catch up with each other—don't lose this time with your family. If you like having noise in the background, try turning on some music instead of the television.

Set and enforce TV rules. Set limits on the amount and type of TV shows your children can watch and stick to these limits.

Explain why you have rules. Having limits is not enough, es-

pecially for older kids. Taking too strict of an approach can backfire and make them even more interested in watching "forbidden" shows. Talk with your kids about why you are setting limits. Discuss your concerns and your family's values. Acknowledge that different families may have different rules.

Help your kids make good viewing choices. Teach your children how to find appropriate programs to watch. Choose videos/DVDs at home for them to watch in the place of broadcast or cable TV. Learn more about the V-chip, TV ratings, and websites that give program content information to help you and your kids make more educated viewing choices.

Watch TV together as a family. Make watching TV a family activity. Consider having a regular "family movie night" at home. Involve children in choosing and talking about the films you watch together.

Talk about what you see. Watch TV together with your kids and talk with them about what happens in programs and commercials.

What Parents Can Do

Are you worried about how TV might be harming your child (or your family as a whole)? Here are some ideas that can help:

Set a good example. Take a look at your own TV habits. How much TV do you watch? What kinds of shows do you watch? Think about ways you could change your own habits to set a good example for your family.

Peanut Puzzler

1 cup peanut butter, creamy or chunky
3 tbs. toasted sesame seeds
1/4 cup honey

1. Mix together all the ingredients and spread on bread or

fruit. Makes 1 1/4 cups

2. This spread is great with fresh fruit, such as a few halved grapes, apple slices, or banana slices. For added enticement, you can use a cookie cutter to shape the

sandwich into puzzle pieces.

Fun Fact: The average American child will eat 1,500 peanut butter sandwiches by high school graduation.



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The Parenting Journey—Welcome to Wellness

Be healthy: When we take good care of ourselves, we can be better parents and set a good example for our children. We should try our best to eat well, get plenty of rest and exercise regularly. We should also make time in our lives for things we love.

Keep learning and growing: Continuing to learn and explore enriches our lives and shows our children the value of lifelong learning. Let's be on the lookout for something new to learn.

Build strong relationships: We are strengthened by our friends and family. In addition, when our children see us forming and nurturing healthy relationships with good people, it teaches them lessons about the importance of relationships.

Know your strengths: As you think about your parenting, consider what strengths you have. Maybe you have lots of good information on caring for children and you have good friends and family members who are glad to help you. It is important to know what your strengths are.

Know your needs: We all have needs and limitations as well as strengths. Maybe you do not have a stroller for your baby and your energy has been low. Noticing those needs prepares you to do something about them. Source: Arkansas State Extension www.arfamily.org

January Quick Fix Meal Idea

Visit <http://oces.okstate.edu/cleveland>

Chicken and Biscuit Dinner

- 1 package (6) refrigerated biscuits
- 1 1/2 cups chopped, cooked chicken or turkey
- 1 (12 oz) jar chicken or turkey gravy
- 1 cup frozen cut green beans or peas
- 1/4 teaspoon poultry seasonings
- Dash pepper

1. Turn the oven to 350°. Using the scissors, cut each biscuit in half. Save until Step 3.

2. In the saucepan, put the chicken or turkey, gravy, green beans or peas, poultry seasoning, and pepper. Mix together with the wooden spoon. Put the saucepan on the burner. Turn the burner to medium. Cook and stir till bubbly. Turn off the burner. Remove the saucepan from the burner.

3. Put the small casseroles or 10oz custard cups in a shallow baking pan. Use the ladle or large spoon to spoon the hot chicken mixture into each casserole. Put three biscuit pieces on top of each casserole.

4. Put the pan with the casseroles in the oven. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or till the biscuits are golden. Use hot pads to remove the baking pan from the oven. Turn off the oven.

