



Hygiene

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Hygiene means to keep something clean in order to support health. It is important for everyone to practice good hygiene. Children learn about hygiene from the adults around them, especially from their parent or guardian. Sometimes it can be hard to teach children about hygiene. Here is a helpful guide to hygiene and some tips for how to make it more enjoyable to teach to children:

Hand-washing

Washing hands is the first line of defense against bacteria and disease. We touch so many things every day and this can transfer things to us that make us sick. Hand-washing should happen after outdoor activities or playing with animals, before and after cooking, after using the bathroom, and as often as possible when you are sick or around someone else who is sick. It can be hard to help children to get into the habit of washing their hands so often, so the adults helping them can try using soaps with a scent that the child likes, try pointing out to the child everything they touch in a short period of time, or try practicing counting with child while washing their hands. Hand-washing should take 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Be sure to also keep the nails clean and trimmed since dirt gets under the nails. Hand sanitizer is not as effective as soap and water, so use soap and water when possible.

Bathing

Keeping the body clean is important for many of the same reasons that hand-washing is important. Bacteria can get on other parts of the body beside the hands and then still get to the mouth or nose to make us sick. Bathing helps to keep the skin and hair healthy, and to get sweat (or irritants that may later cause itching) off of the skin and hair. It can also help keep scabs, scrapes, and rashes clean. Plus, it is always nice to smell good! Some children really do not like taking baths, so adults helping them can try letting them use the shower, putting them in the tub with toys, or having them scrub with a soapy washcloth and then rinsing.

Clean clothes

Dirty clothing, especially underclothing, can have microorganisms. Re-wearing or sharing dirty clothes can lead to skin irritations or even infection. Keeping clothes clean prevents mold and permanent stains to the clothing as well as bad odors. Adults helping children dress themselves can let the child choose their clothing, while keeping it appropriate for the weather.

Oral Hygiene

Keeping the mouth clean prevents bad breath, cavities, and gum disease. Keeping the mouth clean also prevents pain. If decay occurs, it can affect the ability to eat or speak. Everyone should brush their teeth at least twice a day for two minutes each time. Flossing is also recommended to keep gums strong and to clean areas that a toothbrush cannot reach.

It is recommended that everyone visit a dentist every 6 months. For children who do not enjoy brushing their teeth, adults can try making teeth brushing a group activity, so it becomes a game to the child. There are also light-up toothbrushes and two-minute online videos that can help children find brushing their teeth more enjoyable.

REFERENCES

<http://www.healthline.com/health-slideshow/hygiene-habits-kids#1>

<http://www.hygieneforhealth.org.au/clothing.php>

RESOURCES

Bear River Health Department – (435) 792-6500

655 E 1300 N, Logan, UT 84341

<http://www.brhd.org>

Cache Valley Community Health Center – (435) 755-6061; (435) 755-6075

1515 N 400 E, North Logan, UT 84341; 944 S Main Street, Logan, UT 84321

<http://blchc.org>

<http://www.childfun.com/themes/people/health-and-hygiene>

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/104096-games-teach-kids-personal-hygiene>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxcHmpjKvs4&list=PL5AB7060651B0E9B8>

Activity: Set a family goal on something about Hygiene. Examples could be having the children bathe every other day, having their teeth brushed morning and night, washing their hands more often, etc.

Father/Male Engagement: Help your child wash his/her hands, brush his/her teeth or take a bath. Talk to them about germs and how to stay healthy