



# Hygiene

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It is important for children to practice good hygiene habits, especially at a young age. Hand-washing, bathing and brushing teeth are all examples of good hygiene. Here is a head-to-toe guide to good hygiene that will establish lifelong healthy habits.

## Hair Washing

Young children do not need to wash their hair every single day. In fact, too much can cause dry scalp. It is more important to wash hair more frequently as children approach the teen years because hormones can cause hair to become oily. For young children it is only recommended two or three times a week.

## Bathing

Not all children love taking a bath. Try other ideas to help them get clean. Let them sit in the bath tub in a bathing suit with two big tubs of warm water, one soapy and one clean. Give them a washcloth and have them use the washcloth in the soapy water to scrub their body, then rinse the washcloth with the clean water, and repeat. Try letting them use the shower. Make it fun by letting them play with a few toys. Measuring cups, measuring spoons and funnels make great bath toys!

## Skin Care

In the toddler and preschool years, children get rashes, bumps, scrapes, and scabs. They just come with the territory at that age. Parents can help children to look over their skin before getting dressed to make sure there aren't any skin concerns that need to be addressed.

## Oral Hygiene

Good oral hygiene not only gives you clean teeth and gums but can also prevent bad breath, cavities, and heart disease later in life. It is recommended that children brush and floss at least twice a day and see a dentist every six months. It may be helpful to use a timer and let your child help time how long they are brushing their teeth. A full two minutes is recommended.

## Hand Washing

Hand washing is very important in good hygiene. Encourage and help your children to wash their hands before and after meals, after playing outside, after playing with pets, after using the toilet, and after being in contact with someone who is sick. Teach them that proper hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and disease. Washing hands for at least 20 seconds is recommended. Singing "Happy Birthday" two times through while washing is about the right amount of time.

## Nails

It is easy to forget that fingernails are a prime place for bacteria and germs to thrive, and those little fingers all too often go into the mouths, noses, and eyes of children. It is important to keep nails clean and trimmed. Use a fingernail brush weekly to scrub dirt and germs out from under the nails before trimming them.

## **Ideas**

Try bathing your child at a different time of day. If bath time is usually at night, try switching it to the morning.

Put some glow bracelets in the bath water and turn the lights down.

If you're okay with it, let them give their dolls, cars, toy animals a bath.

Blow bubbles during bath time.

Let them wear their swimsuit and goggles while bathing to make it seem more like swimming.

Let your child practice brushing others teeth like you or their dolls or toy animals.

Listen to some of your child's favorite music or sing songs while brushing.

Let your child pick their toothbrush or toothpaste.

Fill the sink with soapy water, add some dishes and a wash cloth and let your child wash the dishes while also getting their hands clean.

Put glitter on your child's hands and have them wash until it comes off. You can teach them about germs while doing so by teaching that washing will help all the germs come off their hands just like the glitter.

With all things, let your child see you doing it and they're more likely to follow.

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