

With the beginning of school, now is a good time to take a few minutes to remind your child about some of the simple things they can do to stop the spread of germs that make themselves or others sick.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness is through frequent hand washing and proper technique. Proper hand washing technique, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), includes:

- Use soap and running water.
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them for 20 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces (including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails).
- Rinse well and leave the water running until after drying your hands.
- Dry hands with a single use towel.
- Turn off faucet using a paper towel.

If soap and running water are not available, use of an EPA approved hand sanitizer is recommended when hands are not visibly dirty.

It is important to wash your hands frequently, including:

- Before and after eating.
- After using the bathroom.
- After contact with body fluids or changing diapers.
- After handling raw meat, poultry or fish.
- After touching animals.
- After blowing your nose.
- After coughing or sneezing.
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts.
- Before or after treating a sick or injured person.
- Before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose.
- After being in a crowded public space.
- After handling garbage.

Other good habits, such as getting plenty of sleep, engaging in physical activity, managing stress, drinking water, and eating good food, will help you stay healthy all year.

If you, or your child, have symptoms of an illness (e.g. fever, coughing, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, rash, or inflammation of the eyes or eye lids), the Oklahoma Department of Health recommends:

- Staying home from work or school to reduce the risk of exposing others.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze. Put the used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.

Students that have been ill should be fever free and off fever reducing medications for 24 hours, before returning to school.

For more information on the Oklahoma Department of Health's recommendations, visit the website at: [www.ok.gov/health](http://www.ok.gov/health)

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