

10 SIMPLE WAYS KIDS CAN KEEP THEMSELVES WELL

Many factors influence a child's wellness attitude and how they care for their overall health. Empower children to guide their own health in a positive direction by sharing these simple habits for life-long wellness.

1. Stomp Out School Bugs. Classrooms, playgrounds, buses and computers are perfect breeding grounds for germs. Teach kids to cough or sneeze into the inside of their elbows, wash hands frequently, and not share water bottles, tissues or combs.

2. Get your ZZZZ's. Most children do not get the adequate amount of sleep recommended: 10-11 hours for children ages 5-12 and 8-10 hours for older children. Help students maintain attentiveness, consistent academic performance and short-term memory by establishing regular bedtime hours and routines.

3. Sick = Stay Home. If a student is not feeling well, teach them to be responsible for their well-being and the health of their peers by staying home to recover. Sharing with others is a valuable attribute, but it stops at sharing germs!

4. You Are What You Eat. Eating a balanced diet helps children fight off illness, maintain physical endurance and improves brainpower. Help children learn what healthy food choices are and the importance of a balanced diet.

5. Choose H2O. The key to being well is drinking water and milk most often. Once in a while it is fine to have juice, but stick to the 100% juice and save sugary soda drinks for special occasions.

6. Avoid Food as Reward. Children are motivated by the reward system. Rewards are great, but teach kids to avoid food as the prize. Often food rewards are of low-nutritional value and promote children eating when they are not even hungry. Use alternatives such as participation in special events, activities or time with each other as valuable rewards.

7. MOVE! Spend time with kids as they explore physical activities they enjoy and help them find ways to be active on a daily basis. Get the whole family involved and committed to physical activity. Assure children that they don't have to be in a sport to get beneficial exercise. Individual activities such as running, biking, skating or swimming are equally good options.

8. Listen to What Your Body is Telling You. Teach children how to listen to signs that their bodies are sending—such as pain, a full tummy and tiredness—and how to respond to the needs of their bodies. Provide resources they can turn to for questions or help.

9. Turn Off the TV. And the computer! Help kids limit screen time to a maximum of two hours a day. Work with children to find active alternatives for free time after school, before bed and on the weekends.

10. A Well Heart and Head. Wellness is not limited to the physical. A well-rounded individual gives equal attention to their emotional and mental wellness. Help students understand how to exercise their brains with board games, puzzles and problem-solving, and maintain emotional wellness by managing stress and maintaining positive relationships.

Some tips adapted from Kids Health, <http://www.kidshhealth.org/kid/>