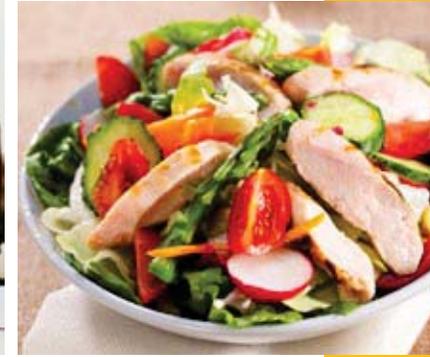




# BalanceHealth<sup>SM</sup> Newsletter

September 2016 | Written by the wellness experts at eni



## Keeping Kids Healthy at School

With the kids back at school, germs are sure to follow. Germs are spread quite easily in the school environment as young children sometimes do not have the best hygiene. In addition, kids tend to be very hands-on and enjoy sharing their food, drinks, pencils, and undoubtedly germs. All of this puts little immune systems to the test and can lead children to become frequently ill during the school year.

Luckily, there are many habits that we can teach our children to help keep them healthy while at school.

### Wash Hands

Most health practitioners agree that hand washing is the simplest and most effective way to stay healthy at school. Remind your children to always wash their hands before eating snacks and lunch. It is also important to wash hands after using any community objects like a shared computer, library books, water fountain, etc. Finally, be sure to remind your child of the importance of washing their hands after using the bathroom. The Mayo Clinic recommends telling children to wash their hands for as long as it takes to sing "happy birthday" twice.

### Use Hand Sanitizer

Provide your child alcohol-based hand sanitizer to keep in their backpack or desk. Although hand washing is best, there are times when kids are not able to get up and use the bathroom to wash their hands. In these instances, encourage them to use hand sanitizer instead.

### Keep Hands off the Face

No matter how diligent kids are about washing hands and using sanitizer, hands are often covered with germs and the fastest way for germs to enter the body is through the "openings" on the face. Tell children not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth unless they have thoroughly cleaned their hands.

### Don't Share Personal Items

More specifically, tell kids not to share water bottles, food, drinks of any kind, makeup, especially lip balm, utensils, and pillows or blankets (for young children who still take naps). The Mayo Clinic suggests offering

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**1.800.327.2255**

eni's BalanceHealth program is a confidential service provided by your employer to help you achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.



your child this simple rule – “if you put the item in your mouth, keep it to yourself.”

## Cover Your Mouth

Just as important as avoiding germs is helping your child actively avoid spreading their illness in the school environment. Reiterate the importance of covering your mouth and nose whenever your child sneezes or coughs. Provide your child with a pack of tissues to keep with them at school. Encourage them to cough or sneeze into the tissue, throw it out immediately and then wash or sanitize their hands. If a tissue is not available instruct them to cough or sneeze into the crook of their elbow, rather than into their hands.

It is also important to keep your child's immune system strong so they are better able to fight off germs when they do come into contact with them and recover more quickly if they do become ill.

## Sleep

It is so important that your child gets plenty of restorative sleep. Children often have to wake up quite early for school, so be sure they have a bed time that provides between 8 to 11 hours of sleep, based upon their age. Younger children need more sleep for optimal functioning. Toddlers and pre-schoolers require between 10 and 14 hours of

sleep, so adjust accordingly if you have a child in daycare or pre-school.

## Vaccinations

It is also important to follow your pediatrician's recommended vaccination schedule. Many doctors also recommend that children get a yearly flu vaccine as the flu is spread quite easily in the school environment.

## Nutrition

Finally, be sure to provide your child with a healthy diet chocked full of nutrients that can help ward off illness. Kids love sweets and that's ok as long as they are eaten in moderation and balanced with plenty of healthy food. Most adults don't have too much trouble incorporating in tasty fruit and protein packed lean meat, nut butters, and eggs into their child's diet, but veggies can be another story. Many children are so resistant to eating healthy vegetables. Try to sneak at least one serving of veggies into each meal.

Remember **eni's** Wellness Coaches are available to provide our members with additional tips to ensure their children have a healthy and happy school year!

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