



FOR CLEAN, HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN



Save the Children

A handbook for parents and
kindergarten teachers

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For parents and kindergarten teachers

Since the very first years of childhood, it is important to teach the child to recognise the rules and to take care of his/her personal hygiene.

Healthy habits of hygiene and nutrition make children healthy and increase their self-confidence.

In order to be clean, healthy and beautiful, children must know and regularly use hygiene tools.

You can explain them which are the tools for personal hygiene and those for a shared use with other family members or those to use in public places.





To caregivers!

When you make your first efforts to educate children with healthy practices, you usually find yourself facing various difficulties.

However, it is important not to give up and to follow a specific education approach.

Poor hygiene can lead not only to several health problems, but also to social problems such as isolation, which may have serious consequences on children's personal development.

On the other hand, hygiene must not become an obsession, neither should it be restrictive. On the contrary, it must be seen as a natural part of the everyday life, a healthy habit.

LET'S GET TO KNOW SOME OF THE ITEMS THAT ARE RECOMMENDED TO BE PERSONAL:

Personal hygiene items are:

the toothbrush, the handkerchief, the face and toilet towel, the hairbrush.





While eating, children must have the following personal items:
glass, spoon, fork, knife, napkin.



When sleeping, children must have the following personal items:
pyjamas, sheets, pillowcase and blankets.





Clothing is also recommended to be personal:

underwear, garments (dresses, shirts, pants, coats), shoes and accessories (hats, gloves).



Let's get to know some of the hygiene items that can be used by all family members.

These are: toothpaste, soap, toilet paper, shoe brush and wax, broom, bucket, etc.



Let's now list up some of the basic rules we must teach children in relation to how to take care of the hygiene of their body, hair, hands and teeth; to their behaviour, etc. Later on, you will need to continuously remind children these rules and it is very important to bear in mind that the best way for these rules to be taught is by setting an example.





1. CHILDREN MUST BE CLEAN

The best thing for children is to take a warm shower every day, using shampoo or soap. Washing their body will help them not only be cleaner, thus preventing several health problems, but also be more relaxed and have a peaceful sleep.



Advice children not only to wash their hair, but also to brush them several times a day. Hair must also be cut regularly. Children between 3 and 6 years old, especially girls with long hair, may not be able to brush their hair on their own, therefore adults will need to help them. During the time they spend in kindergarten or even at home, it is recommended for girls to keep their hair tied.



2. HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR MOUTH

A child's toothbrush must have very soft bristles and must be changed every 3 months.



Children's toothpaste must not have strong fragrance, must have fruit flavour and must contain fluoride, which eliminates bacteria and strengthens the teeth. The use of fluoride toothpaste must start at the age of two.





How much toothpaste?

The quantity of fluoride toothpaste must be equal to a pea seed or to the nail of child's thumb. Fluoride helps the solidification of teeth enamel, consequently preventing tooth decay and loss. The best source of fluoride are toothpastes.



How are teeth brushed?

Advice children to wash their mouth with water and start use the brush. Both the front and the back side of all maxillary and mandibular teeth need to be brushed. In order to eliminate as many microbes as possible, brush movements must be horizontal, vertical and circular. Do not forget that microbes and bacteria also reside on the tongue so the tongue must be also cleaned carefully!



Mouth rinsing.

Mouth must be rinsed thoroughly with large amounts of water. Then, the brush is also rinsed carefully and put in its assigned place (a glass). The best is to keep it with its head cover on, if it has one.



The use of dental floss.

Children are also advised to use the dental floss in order to remove the food that may get stuck between their teeth. Adults must provide them with a specific cord for teeth, of 10 to 15 cm of length. They must wrap it around their index fingers and introduce it between each pair of teeth moving it back and forth.

NOTE! TOOTHBRUSHING MUST LAST TWO MINUTES.



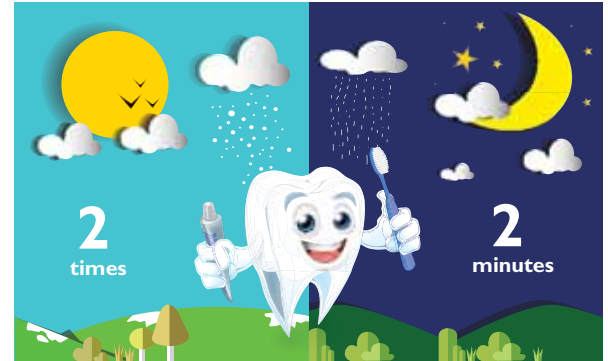


But, how many times must teeth be brushed?

Teeth must be brushed:

- every morning
- every evening before going to sleep
- every time we eat
- every time we have a sugary drink.

In any case, never less than two times per day.



**Do not forget regular dental check-ups
1-2 times per year!**

Regular dental check-up will:

- prevent the occurrence of caries or other diseases in time
- educate children on good hygiene
- reduce children's fear or stress of dental interventions.



3. HOW TO KEEP HANDS CLEAN ?

Do you know
what microbes
can cause you
when your
hands are
dirty? Here's
what microbes
say:



- I can cause diarrhoea
- I can cause ear pain
- I can cause sore throat
- I can cause pimples
- I can cause cough
- I can infect a wound
- I can cause red eyes
- I can cause many transmissible diseases





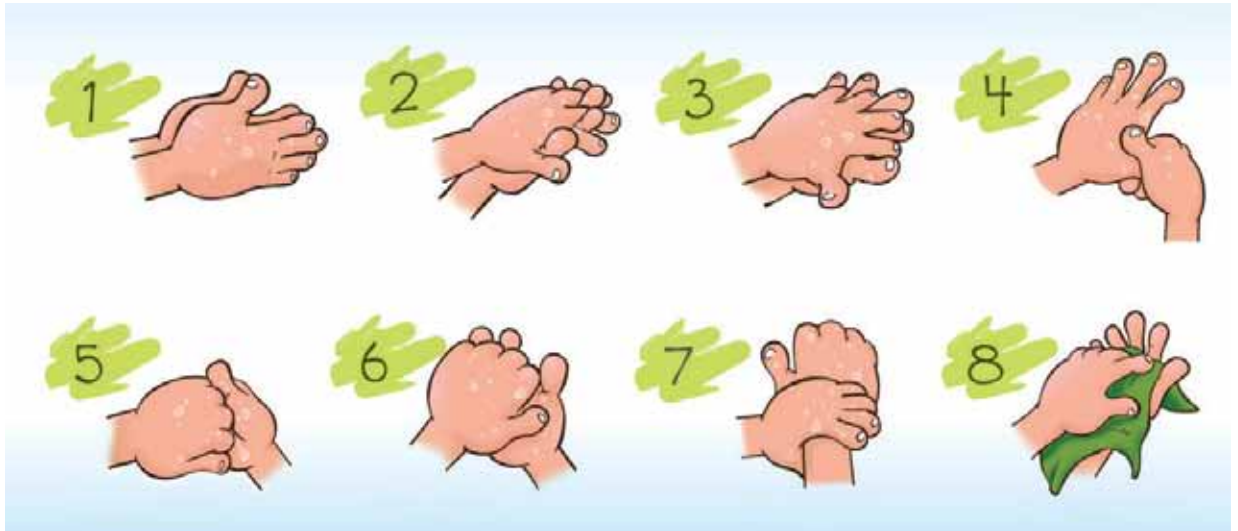
In order for microbes to be removed, hands must be washed with warm water and soap.

Handwashing is considered a reliable vaccine, as it protects us from many diseases.

How must hands be washed?

1. Wet your hands

2. Soap your hands and rub them well together (scrub both sides of your hands and in between your fingers)



3. **How long must handwashing last?** Scrub your hands well counting to 20 or singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse your hands thoroughly under the running water
5. Dry your hands well with your personal towel or, if in kindergarten, with disposable paper towels.



This is how clean hands would look, if children would take a look at their hands after washing them with water and soap: they would be microbe free.





When do hands need to be washed?

Hands must be washed continuously during the day, but you must advise children to not to forget to wash their hands especially:

1. After using the toilet



2. Before eating



3. When they touch an animal



4. After playing



5. When they blow their nose



But, remember!

Nails must not just be washed but also cut regularly, because they can harbour many microbes.

Adults must take care of the nails of children this age.





4. LET'S LEARN THE EATING RULES

In order for children to grow up healthy, they must be educated to eat all kinds of food. Some types of food are produced

locally, others come from far away. It is suggested to mainly eat local and seasonal food as it is cheaper and fresher.

Appropriate food and good nourishing are essential to:

- survival,
- physical growth,
- mental development,
- academic progress,
- productivity,
- health,
- wellbeing.

All kinds of food contain energies and nutrients. The nutrients are divided into:

• **Macronutrients:** carbohydrates (sugars), lipids (fats), proteins and liquids. These can be used by our body only after digestion, which breaks them down into simple easily absorbable components.

• **Micronutrients:** essential vitamins and mineral salts that are introduced into our body in small quantities, unprocessed after digestion or absorption, and play a crucial role in regulating the realisation of vital processes such as enzymatic reactions, etc.

Food is also divided into nutritional groups. Below you will find some of the main representatives of each group:



Group 1:
Grains and potatoes



Group 2:
Fruits and vegetables



Group 3:
Dairy (milk and its derivatives)





Group 4:

Foods containing proteins (meat and its meat products, fish, eggs, beans, etc.)



Group 5:

Sugars (Sweets and juices)



Group 6:

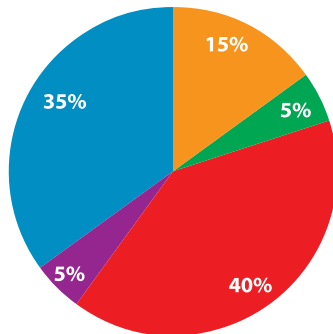
Oils and fats

- The use of fats is important for our health, but their quantity must be limited in order to balance the caloric intake.
- Olive oil is the best. For children at an early age butter can also be used, but in moderated quantities, while margarines must be avoided.



Why is the nutrition of preschool children so important?

- Good nutrition improves children's learning potential and wellbeing.
- Illnesses in well nourished people are less frequent, milder, and briefer.
- Good nutrition also stimulates physical, mental and social wellbeing during the entire lifetime, reinforcing positive image and increasing self-esteem.



Based on the WHO recommendation, the distribution of energy intake by meals must be:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| - Breakfast | 15% |
| - Midmorning meal | 5% |
| - Lunch | 40% |
| - Mid-afternoon meal | 5% |
| - Dinner | 35% |





These are some advices you can give children on healthy nutrition:

Eat all types of foods



**Eat as much fruits and vegetables
as possible, at least 5 times a day**

Children must eat fruits and vegetables of all colours because they contain vitamins and minerals that protect our health and make our skin and hair more beautiful.



Eat 5 meals a day: breakfast, midmorning meal, lunch, mid-afternoon meal and diner.

Never skip breakfast.

Having breakfast helps children be more focused, more joyful and more active. A cup of milk in the morning fortifies their bones and makes them stronger.



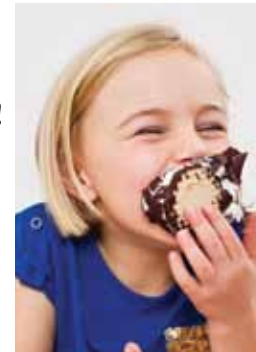
Drink as much water as possible.

The younger they are, the more water their body contains. Drinking water from an early age educates them for the future.



Do not exaggerate with sweets and juices or other sugary drinks!

Children must consume a minimum amount of these products because they may ruin their teeth and make them gain weight.





Sit all together around the table for the meals.

In kindergarten or at home you must eat all together at least one meal. This makes families more united and enables parents to give the good example of eating every food that has been prepared.



Shut down the TV and do not allow games during the meals!



Table manners

Caregivers must know a few rules on how to behave at a table during a meal in order to give children appropriate advice.

1. Children must sit at a table together with adults and, at this age, they must eat the same food as adults; of course, in smaller amounts. When they are in the kindergarten, they can be encouraged to eat by watching their peers.
2. Children must be encouraged to try all types of food.
3. Food must be presented as interesting and diverse looking as possible.
4. Children must not eat anything that may spoil their appetite before meals.
5. If children do not eat the first meal, they will be more hungry at the next one.
6. You should not put very large portions on their plate. Children get scared when they see how much food we have put on their plate because they think they will not be able to finish it all and so they get discouraged.
7. Leave the spoon in front of them and do not pay attention to what they are doing. Children must be left free to do whatever they want with food, even play with it and hold it in their hands.
8. You should not beg children to eat, because this would make them focus on what you are telling them and not on their food.
9. The parent/teacher must be calm and try not to transmit anxiety to the child. For most children this age, eating may become an unpleasant event, making them lose the appetite and the pleasure of tasting the food.





Teachers can prepare a table containing the basic rules of eating and place it in the space where children have their meals. For example:

- Do not talk while eating!
- Do not chew with your mouth open!
- Do not swing on the chair!
- Do not spill water on the table!
- Do not throw your food on the floor!
- Try all types of food!
- Keep your table tidy!
- When finished eating, take your plate to the assigned place!



5. THE MORE THEY PLAY, THE STRONGER THEY GET



Advice children to play as much active and group games as possible in order to become stronger and beautiful and not to gain weight. Group games help them socialize with their peers, share their toys or their ideas on the game, and be creative and active. The more they play outdoors, in the fresh air, the better.

Children's games must be combined:

- Games aimed at increasing patience and strengthen the heart and lungs such as jogging, swimming, jump rope, etc.
- Games aimed at making them more agile, games that encourage children to bend, tighten and stretch such as gymnastics and dancing.
- Games aimed at strengthening them and toughen their muscles such as climbing, riding down the playground slides, etc.





In order to be healthier, children must reduce the time they spent watching TV or playing electronic games to the minimum.

The time they spend watching TV:

- alienates them from their friends, from interactive playing,
- makes night sleep more difficult,
- increases the risk of eye damage and of gaining weight.





When children write or draw, they must sit up straight with their arms on the table.



Children should not spend more than 1-2 hours per day in front of a screen. The best thing is for children to be in the presence of an adult so that he/she can choose the programs they watch and also explain them the things they are watching.



6. HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Children can easily become victims of incidents, because they have a lot of energy and their interest in exploring their environment is greater than their ability to prevent danger.

It is adults' job to make sure children are playing and exploring their environment without putting themselves in danger.

There can be many dangers. Let's list some of them:

- pushing – crawling – pulling –obstacles encountered during the various activities;
- touching electrical outlets or uncovered wires;
- airway obstruction while eating or drinking;
- foreign objects in the eye, ear, nose;
- getting burned by standing near a heated object,
- detergents and other cleaning products, medicines;
- jumping from high places;
- conflicts among peers (not only physical, but psychological as well)
- accidents by car, bicycle, etc.





Consequences to children's health can also be many: cuts, scratches, pressing, pushing down, skin injury, bruises, broken bones, asphyxiation/obstruction caused by foreign objects.

Some of the advices you should give children are:

- To love one another and not to push or hit each other while playing;
- To support all the differently able people and not forget that all have equal rights;
- To know the risks they might encounter while eating;
- Not to touch cleaning objects or drugs;
- To know the dangers caused by heights, heated objects or electric objects;
- To sit on their own car seats on the back of the car and keep their seatbelt fastened;
- To always wear a helmet when playing with bicycles or other wheeled devices.



Caregivers and parents must teach children the traffic signs and regulations, such as:

- To always walk on the sidewalk;
- To use the pedestrian crossing or wait for the green light when attempting to cross a road;
- To always wear a helmet and knee pads and use the designated path when riding a bicycle;

Children must be also kept safe from high temperatures in summer or low temperatures in winter, as their small bodies are at risk in both seasons.

On hot days, children must wear light cotton clothes. From 10 to 16 o'clock children must not go outdoors or to the beach.





Children must wear large-brim hats. While at the beach, they must use sunscreen and drink a lot of water.



During winter it is cold and it rains or snows. During cold days children must wear warm clothes, hats, gloves, jackets and shoes. Do not forget to recommend to the children to drink tea and eat hot meals.



7. HOW TO BE GOOD TO THEIR FRIENDS

It is recommended that all children go to the kindergarten because there they have fun playing with their friends. Caregivers must advise children to:

- love all their friends indiscriminately;
- play all together;
- share toys with each other;
- help each other
- not fight with or hit each other
- encourage group games or activities.

We must always remember that all children are equal!





8. SLEEPING HELPS THEIR GROWTH AND STRENGTHENS THEM

In order for children to be healthy, their body needs to rest and refresh. That's why it is important for children to sleep well.



Did you know that they need to sleep 10 to 12 hours a day?



Before going to sleep, they should remember to go to the toilet, wash their body, brush their teeth, and put on their pyjamas. Parents or other family members are suggested to read them a story or tale and to switch off the lights as soon as they fall asleep.



It is recommended for children to drink a glass of warm milk before sleeping because it helps them have a more peaceful sleep.





9. REGULAR MEDICAL CHECKUPS

The doctor should be a child's friend and children must get regular checkups even when they are not sick.



Children must receive regular hearing and vision screening.



We should have our children's weight and height regularly measured to be able to monitor their growth.





Children should also be protected from diseases. For this they should get vaccinated following the immunization schedule approved by the Ministry of Health.



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