



# A clean and healthy start to school

For parents with children starting school



## Protect your child from infection

### Healthy hygiene

Moving from nursery to school can be a big change for both children and parents. One thing you could do without worrying about is your children picking up an infection.

With 80 years' expertise in hygiene and a shared interest in protecting infants and young children from infection, Dettol, together with the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), has developed this leaflet to show you how following good hygiene practices can help your child reduce their risk of picking up an infection.

### Germs and hygiene

Germs, like bacteria, viruses and fungi, are found all around us. Some are harmful and can make us ill, by causing infections like colds, flu and tummy upsets. Others, like the bacteria in our gut, are actually useful to us, by helping us digest our food properly. You can't stop your child coming into contact with germs, but what you can do is teach them that through the use of some simple hygiene measures, they can reduce their risk of picking up an infection. This is especially important once they start school as they will encounter a variety of different germs and infections from other children. Your child's nursery will also help them to learn about germs and hand washing as part of a healthy lifestyle.

### Hand hygiene – helping to control the spread of germs

Germs can be picked up in several ways:

- Breathing – when an infected person talks, sneezes or coughs, they transfer germs into the air which can land on surfaces or be breathed in directly by others.
- Touch – germs left on contaminated surfaces such as toilet flushes, taps, door handles, toys and kitchen surfaces can be picked up and transferred into our body when we touch our eyes, nose, mouth, or a cut.
- Eating – stomach bugs usually arise by eating food that is contaminated with germs or not cooked properly.

Children can help protect themselves from infection by washing their hands with soap and water:

- before eating
- after going to the toilet
- after playing with a pet or animal
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose
- after touching something dirty (e.g. chewed pencils or a used tissue etc.)
- after playing outside
- whenever they look dirty.

The 'helping your child to stay healthy through good hand washing' leaflet is available to download from [www.ndna.org.uk/health&hygiene-resources](http://www.ndna.org.uk/health&hygiene-resources) and includes practical advice and tips for parents to help children wash their hands properly.

Working together to promote good hygiene in nurseries



[www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

## Preparing your child for school

Learning to look after themselves is an important part of your child's development. Here's how you can help them with good hygiene practices.

### Places to wash their hands

If you can, visit the school with your child to see the washing facilities available. Remind them that they must wash their hands regularly, especially after they have been to the toilet and before they eat.

### Talk about toilets

Ideally, where age/stage appropriate, your child should be able to go to the toilet independently before they start school. Talk to your nursery manager or key person for advice and support if you have any concerns about this. You need to give your child the confidence to ask to go to the toilet and to ask for help if they need it. Make sure they wear clothing that is easy to do up again once they have been to the toilet.

### Keep coughs and sneezes to yourself

Germs can spread through the air when we cough or sneeze, so to help stop spreading germs to others, encourage your child to cough into a tissue or into the crook of their elbow rather than into their hands. Germs can also spread from used tissues so teach your child to put them in the bin and wash their hands as soon as they can.

### Pre-school vaccinations

Before your child starts school, make sure they have received the appropriate vaccinations. Contact your nurse or doctor for advice.

*Teach your child to wash their hands when they have handled a used tissue*



## Health and the school environment

### A healthy diet

Your child should have a well-balanced lunch while at school. If your child is to have a school meal, talk to them about healthy things to eat and ask what they had for lunch when they get home. If you are providing a packed lunch, ensure the meal is nutritionally balanced and that you follow good hygiene practices when preparing it. Make sure it is packed in an airtight box and that when at school it is stored correctly before it is eaten.



### Food

Ensure your kitchen is clean and that all food is cooked thoroughly and evenly. Thoroughly defrost food before cooking (unless the instructions state otherwise). Only reheat food once and check food is steaming hot all the way through. Store food at the correct temperature and follow any manufacturers' and use-by instructions.

### First aid

If your child gets a cut or graze, encourage them to tell a teacher so the cut can be cleaned and treated with an antiseptic liquid or cream, and covered with a plaster if necessary.

### Medical conditions and medication

If your child has a medical condition and/or needs to take medication while at school, you should discuss this with your child's teacher or the head teacher so you know how they will help your child.

## Exclusion periods for infectious conditions

When a child has an infectious illness, you should keep them away from school to prevent passing on the infection to others. Below is a table showing the standard exclusion periods in the UK.

Disease	Exclusion period
Chickenpox	For 5 days after the rash appears
Colds	None
Conjunctivitis	None
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting (exclusion from swimming for 2 weeks may be necessary)
Flu	Until recovered
Head lice	None
Measles	For 4 days after the rash appears
Meningitis (bacterial)	Until recovered
Meningitis (viral)	None
Threadworms	None

For illnesses that require medication or other treatment to be given at school, please speak to your child's teacher or refer to the school's policy for more information.

Dettol helps to safeguard the health of families and their loved ones through good hygiene. We are passionate about health and work with partners and medical associations around the world to promote good hygiene. Let's do more for health together.

For healthy tips and more, visit our website at [www.dettol.co.uk](http://www.dettol.co.uk)



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[www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

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