

Health Hints for Kindergarten



See our website at: [School Health Care, Interior Health](#)

Healthy Body

Immunization

Review your child's immunization status. Call your local [public health office](#) to find out when Kindergarten immunization clinics will be held and to make an appointment to speak with a Public Health Nurse.



Eating

- Breakfast is important. Children who eat a healthy breakfast have energy to learn and be active.
- Contact your school for information about available Healthy Breakfast and Snack Programs.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods at mealtime.
- Let children decide what and how much they eat.
- Eat together as a family at least once a day to stay connected.
- Encourage family members to turn off screens and cell phones during meals.

Drinking

- If kids are thirsty, offer water.
- Serve whole fruit instead of fruit juice.
- Serve milk or fortified plant-based milk alternatives with meals for strong, healthy teeth and bones.

For more information:
[Healthy Habits for Kids | HealthLink BC](#)

Sleep

- Children 4 to 6 years old need 10 to 12 hours of sleep at night.
- Overtired children are often cranky and may have problems settling down. They may also seem energized or overexcited when they are actually worn out.
- A regular bedtime routine may include: bath, snack, brush teeth, a goodnight story and time for a cuddle.



Hand Washing

Help stop the spread of germs. Teach your children to wash their hands often:

- Wet hands.
- Add soap and scrub for 20 seconds. Be sure to wash all parts of the hands, especially the fingers. Sing a song like the ABC song to make the time pass.
- Rinse well for 15-20 seconds.
- Dry hands with a clean towel.



Waterless hand sanitizers are an easy way to clean hands if they are not visibly dirty. Young children need to be helped when using hand sanitizers.

Keep Healthy

Healthy Teeth

- **Keep Cavities Away:** Brush your child's teeth twice a day with a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Floss your child's teeth once a day.
- **Eat Well:** Pack lunch and snacks that include fruits, vegetables, yogurt and/or cheese. Stay away from sticky or sugary foods (e.g. dried fruit, chips and cookies) as they stick to teeth for long periods of time. Include water each day to quench thirst.
- **Play Safe:** Mouth guards for sports activities help prevent chipped, broken or knocked out teeth as well as jaw injuries.
- **Dental Visits:** It's recommended to see the dentist at least once a year. Ask about dental sealants.

Healthy Minds

Reading, speaking and singing with young children builds closeness and helps develop their language which sets them up for success in school.



Financial Help is Available

The [BC Healthy Kids Program](#) helps low income families with the costs of basic dental care, prescription eye wear and hearing assistance for their children. For more information contact your dentist or optometry clinic directly or call the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction at 1-866-866-0800.

Additional Dental benefits may also be available from the [Canada Dental Benefit Program](#) for eligible families.

Healthy Eyes

Healthy eyes and good vision are an important part of your child's development. Eyes should be checked yearly, as many vision problems and eye diseases can be found and treated early.

Eye Exams

The cost of an eye exam for all children under the age of 19 is covered by the BC Medical Services Plan, however some eye doctors may charge an additional fee. Ask about this when you call for an appointment.



Healthy Ears

Hearing plays an important part in your child's ability to learn, talk and relate to others. Your child's hearing should be checked if they:

- use speech that other people can't understand.
- have trouble hearing certain sounds.
- often ask you to repeat things.
- understand you better when they see your face.
- have trouble hearing in noisy conditions.
- have very loud or very soft speech.
- do not respond when spoken to from behind.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's hearing please contact Hearing Services through our website at: [Children and Youth Health](#) (5-18 years).



Have Fun, Stay Safe

Helmets

Head injuries are preventable!

Bike helmets reduce the risk of head injury in a crash by **85%**. Bike helmets are required by law in BC.

Make wearing helmets a habit for your whole family. **Be a role model.**

For more information:

[Helmet safety](#)

Fun and Fitness

Children 4 to 6 years old should have at least one hour of active physical play every day. Make activity part of your family's daily routine.

Tips to Promote Activity

- Limit the amount of screen time to less than 2 hours a day.
- Give rewards that promote activity such as a trip to the pool, a trip to the park, or a skipping rope.
- Do active things together as a family like taking a walk or spending time in nature.

Healthy Air

Exposing children to [second-hand smoke](#) can increase their likelihood of acquiring [health-related conditions](#) and behavioural difficulties in later years. If you are a smoker:

- Reducing the amount you smoke/vape.
- Only smoke outdoors.
- Change into a "smoke-free" shirt after smoking to reduce the transfer of chemicals to your child.

Looking to quit? See these resources:

[BC Smoking Cessation Program](#)

[Quitting Smoking: Preventing Slips or Relapses](#) | [HealthLink BC](#)

[QuitNow.ca](#) or call 1-877-455-2233

Injury Prevention

Keep your child safe!
See our website for more information.



Playground Safety

Teach your children to leave used needles, used condoms and other unsafe items alone. Teach them to tell an adult who can safely remove them.



Financial Help for Sports Activities

Sometimes, families need financial assistance to get their kids into a sport or physical activity. Contact [JumpStart](#) to apply for a grant.

Booster Seats

- Children over 18 kg (40 lb.) who have outgrown their forward facing car seat must ride in a booster seat until they are 145 cm (4'9") tall or 9 years of age.
- Booster seats need a lap and shoulder belt.



Correctly using child car seats reduces the chance of major injury and death by 70%.

To learn more and receive help ensuring the best fit there may be a: [Car Seat Clinic](#) near you. There is also [Booster Seat](#) information online.

Free car seats may be available in your area. Please visit a local United Way B.C. charity partner (e.g. Friendship Centre, Children's Association, or Family Resource Centre) or visit [Child Safety Initiative](#) for more info.

For more information:

[Transport Canada Booster Seats](#)

Sneezes and Diseases

Does your child have a serious medical condition?

Serious medical conditions include anaphylaxis, diabetes, seizure disorder, severe asthma, blood clotting disorders and serious heart conditions.

At the beginning of each school year give the school information about your child's serious medical condition. Complete the medical forms available at the school.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your school or your local [public health office](#).



HealthLink BC

Want more information on any health topic? Call **811** or go to [HealthLinkBC](#) to speak with a:

- **Registered Nurse**
24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- **Registered Dietitian**
every weekday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST.
- **Pharmacist**
every night from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. PST every day of the year.
- **Exercise Professional**
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST Monday to Friday.



HealthLinkBC

Questions about Head Lice?

See head lice information on our webpage [here](#) or contact your local [public health office](#).



Is your child too sick to go to school?

Keep children at home if they have:

- a fever, and keep them home for 24 hours after the fever is gone.
- vomiting or diarrhea, and keep them home for 48 hours after the last episode.
- a severe sore throat.
- a rash with no known cause.
- a severe cough especially with other symptoms like a runny nose and headache.
- redness, swelling or discharge of the eyes, ears or skin, unless treated.
- been acting unwell and have little energy to join in school activities.

A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases can be found [here](#).

More information to help you decide if your child is too sick to go to school is found [here](#).

Radon

Do you know about Radon? It is an invisible, odourless, radioactive gas and the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers. It can go undetected unless the air is tested for it. Health Canada recommends testing your home every 5 years. For more information, and to order a test kit for your home see the Interior Health [Radon](#) page or check with your local library to see if they have a free radon test kit to borrow.