

# 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 meal 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: [Lunches to Go](#)  
[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, brushing 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

- **Brush to Prevent Cavities:** Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste when brushing your child's teeth. Brush their teeth in the morning and especially at night before bed. Floss teeth daily.
- **Eat Well:** Pack a lunch and snacks that include crunchy fruits and vegetables, yogurt and/or cheese. Limit sticky or sugary foods such as granola bars, dried fruit, chips or cookies. To quench thirst in-between meals – offer water.
- **Play Safe:** Use a mouth guard for sporting activities to prevent tooth damage and jaw injuries.
- **Dental Visits:** Your child should see a dentist at least once a year to have their teeth checked. Ask about dental sealants.

## 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 cannot understand.
- Ask for repetition, do not respond to being called, and/or misunderstands what was said.
- Need to see your face to hear better or be at a close distance.
- Prefer TV/audio volume louder than usual.
- Have had had a recent ear infection.

If there are any concerns; when in doubt, check it out! Contact Hearing Services through our website at: [Children and Youth Health](#).

## Healthy Minds

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



## Financial Help is Available

[Healthy Kids - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) (HKP) assists families who have been approved for MSP supplementary benefits [Supplementary Benefits - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#). HKP provides coverage for basic dental care, optical (eye) care and hearing assistance for children. For more information contact your dentist or optometry clinic directly or call the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to determine eligibility requirements at 1-866-866-0800.

Additional dental financial assistance may also be available from the [Canadian Dental Care Plan - Canada.ca](#) for eligible families.

# Have Fun, Stay Safe

## Helmets Prevent Head Injuries

Bike helmets reduce the risk of serious head injury by **60%** and are required by law in BC. Helmets are needed for many activities.

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

**For more information** on helmet safety and fitting: [Helmet safety](#)

## Fun and Fitness

Children 5 years and older 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.

Exposing children to [second-hand](#) and [third-hand smoke](#) can increase their likelihood of developing [health problems](#).

Reduce the risk of exposure to children by:

- Reducing the frequency that you smoke/vape.
- Create a smoke and vape-free home and vehicle.
- Only smoke outdoors.
- Change into a "smoke-free" shirt after smoking or vaping to reduce the transfer of chemicals to your child.

Need support to quit? See these resources:

[BC Smoking Cessation Program](#)

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

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

## Injury Prevention

See our website for safety and injury prevention 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. Grants are available through [JumpStart](#) | [KidsSport](#) | [RISE](#)

## Booster Seats

- Children over 18 kg (40 lb.) who have outgrown their forward facing car seat are required by law to 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 check for a [car seat clinic](#) near you. [Booster seat](#) information is available 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 information:**

[Transport Canada Booster Seats](#)  
[BCAA booster seat information](#)

# Sneezes and Diseases

## Does your child have a serious medical condition?

Serious medical conditions include anaphylaxis, diabetes, seizure disorders, 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 from 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**  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST Monday to Friday.
- **Pharmacist**  
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.



## 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.