

Anxiety – how to help your child

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All children experience anxious feelings as part of their normal childhood development. Some anxious feelings include fear, agitation, nervousness, worry and apprehension. Some children find it harder to get these feelings under control and may experience anxiety more intensely and more often than others.

Anxiety is when the level of fear or worry about something is out of proportion to the level of risk or danger. Thinking about the situation makes them more worried and tense.

If your child is experiencing anxiety try to:

- Acknowledge your child's fear – don't dismiss or ignore it.
- Gently encourage them to do things they're anxious about, but don't push them to face situations they're not yet ready to face.
- Wait until they actually get anxious before you step in to help
- Praise him for doing something they're anxious about, rather than criticising them for being afraid.
- Avoid labelling your child as 'shy' or 'anxious'.

Your child might need some extra support if their anxiety stops them from doing the things they want to do or interferes with their friendships, school work or family life.

If you are worried about your child, contact your local Community Health Nurse, School Psychologist or General Practitioner. For more information about anxiety in children go to www.raisingchildren.net.au or www.healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au
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Anaphylaxis - what is it?

Anaphylaxis - what is it?

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and can be life threatening. For people at risk, anaphylaxis occurs quickly after contact to the food, insect's or medicine to which the person is allergic.

It is very important that people at risk of anaphylaxis avoid any contact with the trigger (allergen). This is especially important with food allergy – a severe reaction can occur if the allergic person comes into contact with even a tiny amount of the food.

Anaphylaxis must always be treated as a medical emergency. Adrenaline autoinjectors (EpiPen®) contain a single, fixed dose of adrenaline which must be given to the person as soon as possible. Immediate administration of adrenaline is the only treatment that works for anaphylaxis.

Emergency first aid for anaphylaxis

- Lay the person flat, do not stand or walk. If breathing is difficult, allow to sit.
- Give the adrenaline autoinjector without delay. (Make a note of the time it was given.)
- Ring an ambulance - 000.
- Stay with and reassure the person. Do not allow the person to walk at any time.
- Give another adrenaline autoinjector if no improvement after 5 minutes
- If the person loses consciousness and there are no signs of breathing, begin CPR.
- Monitoring in a hospital is required for 4-6 hours, even if symptoms improve.

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Anaphylaxis – recognising a severe allergic reaction

Anaphylaxis - recognising a severe allergic reaction

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction which can be life-threatening. It can cause constriction of the airway and/or a dangerous drop in blood pressure. Look for one or more of the following:

- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness of the throat
- Wheezing or a persistent cough
- Difficult talking and/or a hoarse voice
- Persistent dizziness or collapse
- Pale and floppy (especially in young children)
- Abdominal pain or vomiting (if following an insect bite or sting)

It is important to lie the person flat and get help fast.

Some allergic reactions are mild or moderate. These reactions may involve hives, welts, tingling mouth, and/or swelling of the lips, face and eyes. Mild reactions to food can involve abdominal pain and vomiting. Anaphylaxis (severe reaction) may or may not involve these signs and symptoms.

Food intolerances are not life-threatening and should not be confused with food allergies.
For further information contact:

- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy www.allergy.org.au
- Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia www.allergyfacts.org.au
- Western Australian Department of Health www.health.wa.gov.au/anaphylaxis

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Anaphylaxis – checklist for parents of students at risk

Anaphylaxis - checklist for parents of students at risk

- Tell the school administration if your child has been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector (i.e. EpiPen), has experienced anaphylaxis, has any changes in allergies, and/or any other health care needs that may affect anaphylaxis management.
- Make sure you give the school an adrenaline autoinjector, which is clearly labelled for your child.
- If old enough, make sure your child carries an adrenaline autoinjector and knows how to use it. Show his or her friends, brothers and sisters if they are old enough to understand.
- Provide an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis completed and signed by your child's doctor. Update the plan (including a photo of your child) when the adrenaline autoinjectors are renewed (usually every 12-18 months). Action Plans are available from www.allergy.org.au
- Help the school to develop an Individual Health Care and Risk Minimisation Plan for your child.
- Educate your child about how to avoid known allergens (triggers).
- Remind your child to immediately tell someone if she/he feels sick.

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Asthma – what is it?

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As we breathe, air moves in and out of the lungs through branching airways.

People with asthma have sensitive or 'twitchy' airways. When they are exposed to certain 'triggers' (e.g. cigarette smoke), their airways narrow making it hard for them to breathe.

The three main factors that cause this narrowing of the airways are:

- The inside lining of the airways becomes red and swollen (inflamed).
- The muscle around the airway tightens.
- Extra mucus is produced.

For more information: <http://www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au/brochures/consumers/CAHS0709.pdf>

What are the main symptoms of asthma?

- Wheezing - a high pitched raspy sound on breathing
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest

These symptoms vary from person to person, and from time to time within the same person. Some people have all the symptoms, while some may only have a cough or wheeze. Symptoms can also vary considerably in intensity.

For more information visit: <http://www.asthmawa.org.au>

We don't really know why some people have extra sensitive airways and others don't, but we do know that many people are born with a tendency to develop asthma. There is often a history of asthma, eczema or hay fever in brothers, sisters and parents or close relatives. Asthma can occur for the first time at any age.

There is evidence that contact with certain things, for example cigarette smoke during pregnancy and early childhood, increases the risk of developing asthma. For more information on smoking, pregnancy and asthma visit www.smokefreebaby.org.au.

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Asthma first aid

Asthma first aid

Children with asthma can quickly become seriously ill. Asthma needs to be taken seriously. A child with a serious asthma attack may not sound wheezy, but may be pale, quiet and/or breathing with quick shallow gasps.

If a someone is short of breath and wheezing from asthma, follow his or her Asthma Management Plan, or these first aid steps:

- **Step 1** - Sit the person upright, remain calm and help the person stay calm. Do not leave the person alone.
- **Step 2** - Quickly give four puffs of a reliever puffer (blue puffer), one puff at a time. This is best given through a spacer. Ask the person to take four breaths from the spacer after each puff. Use the puffer on its own if no spacer is available.
- **Step 3** - Wait four minutes. If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 & 3.
- **Step 4** - If there is still little or no improvement, call an ambulance immediately - 000.
- Continue to repeat steps two and three while waiting for the ambulance.

For more information about asthma and asthma first aid, go to www.asthmawa.org.au

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Asthma – tips for parents

Asthma - tips for parents

If your child lives with asthma:

- Find out and control or reduce trigger factors if possible, for example; by reducing exposure to household dust, or keeping pets outside.
- Keep your home and car smoke free.
- Watch for signs of asthma when your child has a cold. Be ready to start the asthma management plan as soon as symptoms appear.
- If your child is unwell, tired and not full of energy, check with a doctor to assess if asthma management needs to be improved or changed.
- Help your child to take as much responsibility as possible for managing his or her own asthma.

For more information visit www.asthmawa.org.au

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Asthma and exercise

Asthma and exercise

Children with asthma should be encouraged to exercise or take part in sport, in order to strengthen their chest muscles and to keep fit. For some children, exercise may trigger an asthma attack. Children who cough, wheeze or become extremely breathless with exercise should be seen by a doctor.

Using reliever medication, prescribed by your Doctor, before exercise, will reduce symptoms for most children who have asthma.

It is important to teach children how they can prevent their asthma attacks by using a puffer. Guidelines for the management of asthma and exercise are available through the Asthma Foundation of WA website www.asthmawa.org.au

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Building resilience

Building resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope with difficult situations and 'bounce back' when things go wrong. Young people need to develop resilience in order to navigate life's ups and down. As a parent, you can help your child to become resilient by giving him or her opportunities to learn and practise new skills, for example:

- Allow your child to solve some of their own problems. Learning to deal with issues builds skill and confidence. Don't jump in to fix things, unless the situation has got out of hand.
- Arrange a fun, child-friendly activity each week like a trip to the park, play date with a friend or watching a favourite movie. Regular 'ups' provide a bank of positive emotions to buffer against life's 'downs' that may involve disappointment or conflict.
- Help your kids to think positively. If your child is frustrated by a difficult maths problem, say, "I know that question was hard today, but yesterday I saw you solve a hard problem. You kept trying until you worked it out."
- If you have a disagreement with your child, the most important thing to do is to reconnect and repair the relationship. Let your child cool down then offer a hug or words of support. This has benefits for your child's mental health as well as their ability to deal with relationship problems throughout their life.

For more information about raising a resilient child, go to www.kidsmatter.edu.au or <http://raisingchildren.net.au> or contact your local Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here)**, on **(insert number here)**.

Bedwetting

Bedwetting

Bedwetting, or nocturnal enuresis, is very common in children. Bedwetting has nothing to do with dreaming, and children who wet the bed are not "just being lazy".

If your child wets the bed, there are a number of things you can do to help, such as using a waterproof mattress cover and establishing a before-bed toilet routine. It is not helpful to punish children who wet the bed. Fluids should not be restricted, even before bedtime. Sugary or caffeinated drinks should be avoided.

If your child is still wetting the bed after five and a half years of age, seek help through a referral by your local doctor. A bedwetting alarm is an effective and safe method of treatment available for nocturnal enuresis and may be appropriate for your child.

Contact your local Community Health Nurse or Community Health Centre, **(insert name here)** on **(insert number here)** for more information.

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Bike safety – tips for children

Bike safety - tips for children

Riding a bike is great fun and good exercise for children and teens. Here are a few tips to keep your children safe while cycling:

- Children under 10 should be supervised when riding a bike.
- Children should be taught the rules of the road before they ride by themselves.
- Riding in the driveway should not be encouraged. Children need to know that the driveway is dangerous. Teach them to stop at the end of the driveway, look, listen, and think about whether it is safe to cross the road.
- Every child needs a helmet that fits correctly. Helmets should be worn at all times when riding. Parents should set a good example by wearing a helmet themselves.
- Children's bicycles should be kept in good condition and have the appropriate reflectors.
- Children should wear bright coloured clothing when riding.

For more information visit <http://www.kidsafewa.com.au>

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Burns

Burns

Do you now about first aid for burns?

Make sure the area is no longer burning and apply first aid immediately. Hold the burnt area under cold water for 20 minutes for all burn types.

Remove any jewellery and clothing unless stuck to the area.

Cover the area with a non-adhesive dressing and seek medical assistance.

Seek medical assistance for burns that are deep and causing no pain, are larger than a 20 cent piece, or involve face, hands, airways or genitals. Seek medical assistance if you are unsure of the severity.

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About bullying

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It can be obvious or hidden (covert) and can have long-term effects on those involved.

Bullying can happen:

- face-to-face (e.g. pushing, tripping, name-calling)
- at a distance (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone)
- electronic communication (e.g. SMS, email, messenger, facebook and other social media).

Some conflicts between children are a normal part of growing up and are to be expected. These conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not considered bullying, even though they may be upsetting and need to be resolved. Identifying bullying can sometimes be difficult. Bullying is often conducted out of sight of teachers. Children are often reluctant to report bullying.

Bullying can be devastating for a person's confidence and self-esteem. Children and young people need lots of love and support if they are being bullied. They also need to know that action will be taken to prevent any further bullying.

For more information on bullying and cyberbullying visit the Raising Children Network <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

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Bullying – useful links

Bullying - useful links

- www.bullyingnoway.gov.au provides information for parents on bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence in schools.
- www.bzaf.org.au/ Bully Zero Australia Foundation's vision is to protect and empower Australian children and adolescents to live a fulfilling life free from all forms of bullying.
- www.ncab.org.au The National Centre Against Bullying is creating caring communities for children.

For parenting information related to bullying and cyberbullying visit the Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au

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Bullying – support for your child at home

Bullying - support for your child at home

If your child is being bullied, you should always take action.

Give your child as much support and love as you can at home, while you, the teacher and your child come up with a plan for fixing the bullying. Let your child know that the situation is not their fault, and it can be fixed.

Talk to your child about some of the different ways of dealing with bullying behaviour and why these work. This will help your child feel more confident and less powerless about being bullied.

Some ideas:

- Ignore it and move away from the bully. Encourage your child to physically remove themselves from children who are teasing or bullying.
- Tell the bully to stop. Standing up to bullies in a calm way lets them know that what they are trying to do is not working.
- Avoid high-risk places. By keeping away from situations where bullying occurs, your child can avoid the attention of bullies – as long as they are not missing out on activities because of this.
- Stay around other people. It can help to have others around to protect your child if they are feeling threatened.
- Ask other people for support. Others probably understand what your child is going through and are likely to help if needed. Bullies are less likely to strike if they can see that your child has backup.
- Tell the teacher. Your teacher will be able to help your child deal with the problem, and come up with a plan. The bully might not even know that the teacher is helping your child.

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Chickenpox

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is caused by the Varicella Zoster Virus. In some children the illness will start with a fever or feeling unwell, but in others the rash will appear first.

The spots usually start on the chest as red, itchy lumps. These will become fluid-filled blisters, which will burst and form a crust.

Chickenpox is very contagious and is spread when the person sneezes or coughs or when someone comes in contact with the fluid from one of the blisters. Your child should have had the chickenpox vaccination at 18 months of age. Vaccination is the best way to avoid chickenpox, so make sure that your child is up-to-date with his or her vaccinations.

If your child does contract chickenpox, keep him or her home from school for at least five days after the first spots appear, and until after all blisters are dry. Give your child plenty of fluids and paracetamol or ibuprofen, if needed. If blisters are in the mouth, try a soothing mouth wash and don't give foods high in acid or salt. Soothing lotions or oils for the bath can help the itch.

Diagnosis should be confirmed by a doctor as chickenpox is a notifiable disease (it must be reported). Please make sure the school is informed if the doctor diagnoses chickenpox.

Contact your local Community Health Nurse, (insert name here) on (insert number here) for more information or see the fact sheet at www.public.health.wa.gov.au/

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Colour blindness

Colour Blindness

Colour blindness means that a person cannot distinguish some colours or see the colours differently to other people. Very few people who are colour blind are 'blind' to all colours. Commonly, the colours seen differently are greens, yellows, oranges and reds.

An information leaflet on colour blindness will be distributed to all year 6 students in term **(insert which term)**. Please take the time to read the pamphlet.

For more information and see the Colour Blind Awareness and Support Group on <http://www.members.optusnet.com.au/~doverton/>

If you have any concerns, colour vision testing can be performed by some general practitioners, eye specialists or optometrists. You can also contact your local Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here)**, on **(insert number here)**.

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Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying occurs when technology is used to deliberately and repeatedly engage in unfriendly behaviour to upset and hurt someone. Groups and individuals can be both the perpetrators and targets of bullying.

Cyberbullying can occur in a number of ways including:

- abusive texts and emails,
- posting unkind messages or images,
- imitating others online,
- excluding others online and
- inappropriate image tagging

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone, not just children and young people. It can be more damaging than offline bullying as it can occur 24/7, have a very large audience and be difficult to escape. It can invade a young persons social world both online and offline. As with offline bullying, cyberbullying can have long lasting consequences and children need support to manage this.

For more information or support on cyberbullying visit www.raisingchildren.net.au or <https://kidshelpline.com.au> or <http://au.reachout.com>

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Cyberbullying – how to spot it

Cyberbullying - how to spot it

Many young people who are being bullied online won't tell their parents because they are ashamed or worried about losing their computer privileges. Warning signs that your child may be being cyberbullied include:

- being upset during or after using the internet
- withdrawing from friends and activities, avoiding school or group gatherings
- being moodier than usual, showing obvious changes in behaviour/sleep/appetite
- spending much longer than usual online, or refusing to use the computer at all
- exiting or clicking out of a computer activity if a person walks by
- bringing home lower marks than usual
- 'acting out' in anger at home
- having trouble sleeping, and/or
- frequently complaining of feeling sick, headaches/stomach aches.

For more information or support on cyberbullying visit www.raisingchildren.net.au or <https://kidshelpline.com.au> or <http://au.reachout.com>

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Cyberbullying - tips for parents

Cyberbullying - tips for parents

- Talk to your child about cyberbullying now. Work with your child to develop strategies for dealing with cyberbullying if it happens.
- Identify one or two other trusted adults that your child feels comfortable to talk to about cyberbullying.
- Know what your children are doing online. Set filters so they can be safe online.
- Communicate openly with your child. Help your child learn how to interact safely and respectfully online.
- Put the computer in a shared or visible place in the home.
- Talk with your child about which sites are okay to visit. Have clear rules about their online activity.
- Help your child to block anyone who sends offensive content.
- For more information on bullying and cyberbullying visit the Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au

If you think your child is being cyberbullied...

- Talk to them about changes in their mood or behaviour. Help them to stay connected with people they trust.
- Contact the police if you have serious concerns for your child's safety.
- Work to save evidence of the cyberbullying behaviour. It may be needed by the child's school or Internet Service Provider, or by the police.
- Ask the school to explain their processes around cyberbullying.
- Don't ignore the situation. Listen to your child and give them the help they need.

For more information or support on cyberbullying visit www.raisingchildren.net.au or <https://kidshelpline.com.au> or <http://au.reachout.com>

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Cyberbullying – useful links

Cyberbullying - useful links

- Australian ESafety Commission provides online safety education for Australian children and young people; a complaints service for young Australians who experience serious cyberbullying; and addresses illegal online content through the Online Content Scheme. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- WA laws on cyberbullying and advice can be found at http://www.lawstuff.org.au/wa_law/topics/bullying/cyber-bullying
- StaySmart Online is an Australian government site that provides cyber safety information, <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/>
- Think U Know is an internet safety program developed by Australian Federal Police (AFP) www.thinkuknow.org.au/
- For parents looking for information on bullying and cyberbullying visit the Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au

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Dental Health Services

Dental Health Services

All school children are eligible for the School Dental Service from the year they turn five until they are 17 years of age. For enrolment information contact your closest School Dental Therapy Centre or Dental Health Services on 9313 0555 for further information.

Children aged between 2 – 17 years are eligible to receive dental care under the Child dental benefits schedule if their parent is in receipt of Family Tax Benefit A Visit www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/childdental

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Keep your child's teeth healthy

Keep your child's teeth healthy

People with an intellectual disability are at higher risk of dental disease than the general population. Poor oral health can impact quality of life causing pain, affecting the child's ability to eat and sleep.

Risk factors for Dental Caries:

- Difficulties in holding the tooth brush and brushing properly
- Reliance on parents/ carers to brush teeth
- Prolonged bottle feeding (e.g. over 1 year of age)
- Food pouching and poor clearing of food from mouth
- Soft diets – food sticks to teeth
- Gastric reflux - this exposes teeth to gastric acid from the stomach which damages tooth enamel
- Medications – may have high sugar content, some reduce saliva production, and others may cause overgrowth of gums (gingival hyperplasia)
- Teeth clenching and grinding
- Mouth breathing
- Tongue thrusting
- Pica (eating non-food items)
- Falls or accidents which can lead to delayed tooth eruption and damage to teeth or mouth

A good oral health routine is very important for every member of the family. If you have any questions related to management of your child's oral health speak to your Community Health Nurse **(Insert Name & Phone Number)**.

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Keeping teeth clean

Keeping teeth clean

Plaque is a sticky, almost invisible film of bacteria that builds up on teeth and the gum line. It forms continuously and if teeth are not brushed, plaque will form a thin layer within 24 hours.

Plaque needs to be removed every day. If not, a hard material called calculus forms on and between teeth. To clean teeth use fluoride toothpaste. For children with dysphagia, absent 'gag' reflex or PEG feeds, use non-foaming toothpaste.

Remember:

- Brush teeth at least twice a day and supervise your child if they brush independently.
- Speak to a dental therapist about which type of tooth brush is best for your child.
- Use a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste to clean teeth and spit it out after brushing. Toothpaste should not be swallowed, if your child is unable to spit talk to your dentist about using a fluoride gel to clean your child's teeth.
- Do not rinse with water after brushing teeth.
- If your child food pouches. Make sure their mouth is empty after each meal.
- Older children should floss their teeth daily. A floss holder can assist parents/ carers to floss children's teeth.
- Chlorhexidine mouthwash can be applied to teeth using a toothbrush or cotton swab.

If you have any questions about dental health for your child discuss with your Community Health Nurse **(Insert name & Phone number)**.

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Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis, or 'gastro' is a common condition in children of all ages. It occurs when the bowel is infected by a virus or bacteria. Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps and sometimes, fever. Gastroenteritis, or 'gastro' is a common condition in children of all ages. It occurs when the bowel is infected by a virus or bacteria. Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps and sometimes, fever.

Most cases in children are not serious, but it is very important to make sure that a child with gastro **receives enough fluid**.

If your child has gastro, keep them away from school for 48 hours after vomiting and diarrhoea have stopped. If symptoms persist see your family doctor.

The easiest way to prevent gastro is to make sure everyone in the family **washes their hands regularly**, especially before eating and after going to the toilet.

For more information go to <http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/597/2/gastroenteritis.pm>

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Hand washing

Hand washing

Washing hands is the easiest way to protect ourselves from contagious diseases, like colds, influenza and gastroenteritis. Hands should be washed before and after eating or preparing food, after going to the toilet and after nose blowing.

When teaching your child to wash their hands:

- Use clean water and soap, making sure they cover their hands and wrists.
- Use a brush to clean under nails if they're dirty too
- Dry their hands with something clean (like a paper towel)

Alcohol based sanitisers are useful when soap and water is not available. Use half a teaspoon of the product and encourage your child to rub their hands together until they're dry. If you can see dirt on their hands, it is better to use soap and water.

For more information go to www.healthywa.wa.gov.au

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Head lice

Head lice

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on your head and feed on your scalp. Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. This kind of contact includes doing group work, playing, or hugging.

Tips for preventing head lice

- **Check your child's hair regularly** for head lice and eggs ('nits'). Use a metal fine tooth 'nit' comb and plenty of hair conditioner applied to the dry hair, to make the task easier and more effective. To help children sit still for this, offer distracting activities, e.g. play a favourite video, provide games, iPad apps, offer a head massage.
- **Tie long hair back.** Braid long hair and/or put it up if possible.
- **Consider applying hair gel or mousse.** These do not prevent or repel lice but may help to keep stray hair strands from contact with other heads.
- **Avoid sharing combs or brushes.**
- **Remind your child to avoid head-to-head contact** with other children, e.g. when working at the computer with others, or when playing, or hugging.

If your child has head lice please notify the teacher.

For more information:

Request the Head lice Fact Sheet available from the school

- Visit: http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Head-lice

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Healthy eating - ten tips for parents

Healthy eating - ten tips for parents

1. Give children a variety of different foods
2. Offer nutritious snacks, like fruit, yoghurt, crackers and cheese
3. Encourage your child to eat breakfast
4. Ensure that the family eats together at least once a day
5. Pack your child's lunch at home. Let your child help.
6. If your child refuses a new food, don't make a fuss. Try again several times.
7. Listen when your child tells you they are full
8. When your child is thirsty, encourage them to drink water.
9. Allow your children to help with planning and preparing healthy meals.
10. Plan physical activities for your family

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What should children eat?

What should children eat?

Try and follow these basic guidelines when deciding what to feed your children:

- Include 2 fruit and 5 vegetable serves into the daily routine.
- Serve lean meats, fish, chicken and dairy. Remember eggs and nuts!
- Choose wholegrain bread and cereal.
- Limit saturated fat intake and reduce total fat intake.
- Limit fast food like chips and pastries.
- Limit sugary drinks and offer water or low fat milk instead.
- Limit lollies, chocolate, biscuits, cakes and other foods with a high sugar content.

Following these guidelines will help our children to be healthy children. For further information go to www.eatforhealth.gov.au

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Healthy eating for families

Healthy eating for families

In our modern society, very few of us use up enough energy to take on the extra calories of 'treat' food and drinks. The Australian Dietary Guidelines provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods and drinks that we need regularly, for health and well-being.

By providing your family with the recommended amounts from the Five Food Groups and limiting the foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt, your family will get enough of the nutrients essential for good health, growth and development. A healthy diet reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancers.

The amount of food your child will need from the Five Food Groups depends on their age, gender, height, weight and physical activity levels. For further information go to www.eatforhealth.gov.au

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Healthy food children will love!

Healthy food children will love!

- Blend fruit with milk and a spoonful of low fat yoghurt to make a smoothie.
- Freeze fruit (such as grapes, pear or banana).
- Top toast with ricotta cheese, banana slices and cinnamon.
- Cut vegies into bite-sized pieces.
- Mix chopped tomato and green capsicum with baked beans. Put the mixture on toast, or in a baked potato, and sprinkle with low-fat cheese.
- Add cooked vegetables to lightly beaten eggs. Melt some polyunsaturated margarine in a pan and cook the mixture gently over low heat until eggs are firm.

Remember to use a cool bag or put a bottle of frozen water in the lunch box to keep food cool at school. Keep lunches interesting by including salads, wraps and dips with cut up vegies. For more recipes children will love, go to www.freshforkids.com.au

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A healthy lunchbox

A healthy lunchbox

Healthy lunches and snacks are important for keeping active kids alert and focused and providing them with the nutrition they need every day.

A healthy lunch box should include:

- Fruit – at least one serve of fresh seasonal fruit. If you don't have fresh fruit, canned (in natural juice) is a good substitute. Dried fruit is high in sugar and should be avoided
- Vegetables – vegetable sticks, salads or a mix of raw (with dip) or grilled vegetables
- Dairy – one serve of milk, yoghurt or cheese supports optimal growth and development in children. If your child can't tolerate dairy provide a suitable alternative.
- Protein – lean meat or poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, legumes/beans, or nuts and seeds.
- Grain foods – wholegrain and high fibre varieties are best.
- Water – the best drink to keep children hydrated.

Remember, children who help plan and prepare their own lunch are more likely to eat it. Your child might like to try out this fun, 'Interactive Lunchbox' website: www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html

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Snacks for kids

Snacks for kids

Here are some healthy snack ideas to get active children through the day:

- muffins (made with fruits or grated vegetables or both)
- celery sticks and peanut butter
- English muffins with cheese
- scones (plain, fruit or pumpkin)
- pikelets or pancakes
- small tub of yoghurt
- cheese stick or triangle
- pita chips (cut pita bread into triangles, sprinkle with cheese and bake in the oven until crispy. once cooled store them in an airtight container)
- wholemeal crackers and cheese
- homemade plain popcorn
- fresh fruit pieces.

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Super sandwich ideas

Super sandwich ideas

Here are some sandwich ideas for you to try:

- cottage cheese, dates and pineapple
- ricotta cheese, sultanas, tomato and carrot
- turkey, tomato, lettuce and avocado chicken, celery and low fat mayonnaise
- cheese, pineapple and lettuce
- cheese, carrot and low fat mayonnaise
- cheese, beetroot and avocado
- turkey and relish
- tuna, tomato, carrot and low fat mayonnaise
- beef, tomato, carrot and pickle
- beef, alfalfa, carrot and tomato sauce
- ham, beetroot, spinach and hummus
- chicken, lettuce and avocado.

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More super sandwich ideas

More super sandwich ideas

Here are some super sandwich ideas for you to try:

- cheese and vegemite
- cheese, celery and sliced cucumber
- cheese, tomato, lettuce, grated carrot and hummus
- cottage cheese, vegemite and tomato
- cottage cheese, banana and honey
- baked beans and cheese (great if you have a jaffle maker! Make them the night before and pack them cold the next day)
- tuna, lettuce and avocado
- chicken, tomato, cucumber and low fat mayonnaise

- chicken, alfalfa and hummus
- chicken, carrot, spinach and low fat mayonnaise
- turkey and cranberry sauce
- ham, mustard and tomato
- ham, lettuce, cucumber and low fat mayonnaise
- beef, lettuce and mustard.

Helping your child build healthy relationships

Helping your child build healthy relationships

Parents play an important role in assisting children and young people to build self-respect. This leads to the development of the values and skills needed to express respect to others. There may be some variation in what represents respectful behaviours across different cultures. However, in any cultural context, respect is about behaviours that convey valuing and caring about another person.

Helping your child develop the following skills will help them to form healthy, respectful relationships with peers and adults.

- **Understanding and empathy:** Encourage your child to think about how another person may feel about something.
- **Empathic listening:** Teach them to listen and show they understand another person's point of view
- **Anger Management:** In times of conflict, encourage them to think first before speaking, stay calm and avoid hurtful reactions.
- **Conflict resolution:** Disagreements are normal in any relationship. It's helpful to teach your child that to work through a problem by understanding another person's point of view. To achieve a compromise or agreement is better than winning an argument that leaves the other person feeling bullied, hurt or embarrassed.
- **Problem-solving and decision making skills:** Rather than you offering solutions for your child's problems, hold back and support your child to generate a few possible solutions themselves. Encourage them to think about the impact of each option on themselves and others before deciding on their action.
- **Honesty:** In a relationship where there is trust and acceptance there should be no reason to lie and honesty should be encouraged.
- **Assertiveness:** Help your child to learn how to stand up for themselves or to speak up about their values or needs in a way that is non-confrontational and still respects others.

More information on helping children develop healthy relationships can be found at <https://kidshelpline.com.au> and <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

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How much physical activity should my child be doing?

How much physical activity should my child be doing?

School age children need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. But more is better, so encourage your child to be active for up to several hours each day.

Children need a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. 'Moderate activity' is any activity which is similar in intensity to a brisk walk e.g. bike riding or active playing. 'Vigorous activity' is any activity which makes your child "huff and puff" e.g. organised sports, ballet, running or swimming laps.

Any activity that requires your child to expend energy should be encouraged. Go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> for more information.

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Immunisation – Is your child attending kindergarten for the first time?

Immunisation - is your child attending kindergarten for the first time?

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that children who have turned 4 years of age have the following booster immunisations:

- DTPa-IPV (vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) and polio)
- MMR (vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella)
- All other WA schedule vaccinations recommended, completed.

Your child should have these immunisations as soon as they have turned 4.

If you need more information about these vaccines, please phone one of the following:

- Immunisation clinic <insert local details>
- Central immunisation Clinic in Perth - 9321 1312
- Australian Immunisation Register - 1800 653 809 or www.humanservices.gov.au
- Your Community Health Nurse

Immunisation information for parents

Immunisation information for parents

Immunisation programs in our community are designed to keep everyone well and safe, especially those people who are most at risk, such as babies.

Parents or legal guardians who make a conscious informed decision not to immunise their child should note the following:

- In the case of a Measles or Pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak, Western Australian schools are required by the Department of Health, to exclude students who have not received the appropriate vaccination.

Please make sure your school-aged child is fully immunised and that you have provided a copy of the AIR immunisation record to the school.

Did you know that as parents you can ring the National registry or visit www.humanservices.gov.au to check out your child's immunisation status? All you need is your Medicare number. Alternatively, phone 1800 653 809 or email air@humanservices.gov.au

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Colds

Colds

Upper respiratory tract infections or colds are everywhere, especially in winter, so it is almost impossible to stop children from catching them. Here are some points which may help:

- Teach your child to cover his/her nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and to wash hands straight afterwards. (Sneeze into elbow if unable to wash hands without help).
- Hands should be washed after blowing noses and before eating.
- Use tissues once and then throw them in the bin. (Avoid using handkerchiefs.)
- Keep your child home from school if he/she has a cold/cough/fever/pain.
- Make sure that your children eat a balanced diet of plenty of healthy foods.
- Keep children away from smoke – it irritates their eyes and nasal passages, making it more likely that they will catch a cold.

What to do if your child gets a cold

No treatment will cure a cold or make it go away more quickly, but you can help your child feel more comfortable:

- Rest: This need not be in bed.
- Provide extra drinks: If your child doesn't want to drink much, try giving lots of small sips of water, milk or juice, or ice blocks to suck for older children.

Germs are spread easily to classroom staff and other students. Keep your child home if your child cannot;

- Cover his/her nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Wipe his/ her nose independently
- Wash hands without help

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Influenza

Influenza

Influenza, or the 'flu' is caused by an influenza virus. It is spread through the air when someone coughs, sneezes or talks. It is also spread by touching something that has the virus on it and then touching your nose, eyes or mouth. Common symptoms include sore throat, cough, fever, headache, chills, tiredness and muscle aches.

People with the flu should rest and drink plenty of fluid. Use paracetamol in recommended doses if necessary - but do not give children any medication containing aspirin.

Be sure to keep your child home from school while he or she is sick. If you require school work for your child contact the school to prepare some for you to collect.

The best way to prevent flu from spreading is by washing your hands regularly and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

Flu vaccines are available prior to winter starting. For more information, contact your GP or local Immunisation Clinic.

Why should I consider having my child vaccinated against the flu?

The National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia's peak body for health advice, recommends annual vaccination for anyone six months of age or older who wants to reduce their chances of becoming ill with the flu.

Annual flu vaccination is strongly recommended for anyone six months of age or older with a medical condition that places them at higher risk of severe illness from flu. Children and adults with heart, lung or kidney disease or a weakened immune system, are eligible for free flu vaccine through the National Immunisation Program.

Children without underlying medical conditions who become infected with flu can also develop serious illnesses. Flu can cause high fever and pneumonia, and make existing medical conditions worse. Flu can also cause convulsions and diarrhoea in children.

Influenza viruses are always changing. Each year scientists try to match the strains of influenza viruses in the vaccine to those most likely to cause flu illnesses that year. It takes up to two weeks for protection to develop after vaccination against flu and protection lasts about a year.

The seasonal flu vaccine is available on prescription or via GP and immunisation clinics and is provided free for certain groups. Flu vaccines are available prior to winter starting. For more information visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation or contact your GP or Immunisation Clinic.

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Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene

Ensuring children have good hygiene is one way to prevent illness. Here are some tips for helping children maintain good hygiene:

- Wash hands before and after touching food, and after going to the toilet, touching animals or being around someone who is coughing or has a cold.
- Wash body daily and keep hair clean.
- To prevent body odors, change clothes regularly and use deodorant if necessary.
- Change underwear and socks daily, and leave shoes outside to dry.
- To prevent bad breath, brush and floss teeth and visit the dentist regularly.
- If ill, try not to cough or sneeze on others, clean things that you touch, and throw away things with germs on them (like tissues).

Should you require further information about hygiene, contact your local Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here)** on **(insert number here)**, or go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> .

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Physical activity - family activities

Physical activity - family activities

If you're looking for ways to help your family be more active, why not try...

- walking or riding to school together
- visiting the beach to play cricket or Frisbee
- taking the dog for a walk
- doing some gardening (try building a veggie patch!)
- visiting the local swimming pool
- playing at the park together;
- going for a bike ride
- bush walking
- outings that involve walking (like the zoo)
- participating in a community walk
- buying children presents that encourage physical activity (like sports equipment or a kite).

For more ideas visit www.natureplaywa.org.au/ or <http://raisingchildren.net.au>.

Physical activity for kids

Physical activity for kids

Physical activity should be part of a child's daily routine. Physical activity is not only fun, but also important for healthy growth and development. Being involved in physical activity helps kids to make friends and learn physical and social skills. The two points to remember are:

- Children need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day and up to several hours is even better!
- Children should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media for entertainment (e.g. TV, computer games, internet), especially during daylight hours.

Remember, by encouraging your child to be active when they are young, you are helping to establish a routine that will stay with them throughout their life.

For more information, go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> or visit www.natureplaywa.org.au/ for some great active outdoor ideas.

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Online safety - how to keep your child safe online

Online Safety - how to keep your child safe online

Protecting your children from harm is just as important online as it is in the real world. As a parent or carer, you can play an important role in helping children have safe and positive experiences online.

The internet offers an exciting world of experiences for children and the whole family. It can be entertaining, educational and rewarding. However, using the internet also involves risks and challenges.

Children might be exposed to content that is sexually explicit, violent, prohibited or even illegal. They may also experience cyber bullying or be at risk from contact by strangers.

Children may - unknowingly or deliberately - share personal information without realising they may be subject to identity theft, or that they are leaving behind content that might not reflect well on them in the future.

By taking an active role in talking with your kids about the risks and answering their questions or concerns about something that they find on the Internet you can help them stay safer online.

For more information on keeping your children safe online try the following website:

- [iParent](#) is an online resource developed by the Office of the Children's E-Safety Commission where parents can learn about the digital environment and keep updated on their children's technology use. Guidance for using safety settings on your family's web-connected devices, tips for choosing movies and games and strategies for keeping young people safe online is available. www.esafety.gov.au
- Stay Smart Online is the Australian Government's online safety and security website, designed to help everyone understand the risks and simple steps we can take to protect our personal and financial information online. www.staysmartonline.gov.au/
- Raising Children Network <http://raisingchildren.net.au>.

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Puberty

Puberty

Puberty is an interesting time for children and their parents. Children may become bewildered or embarrassed about what is happening to them. It is important to talk to your child about the physical and emotional changes that come with puberty. Many children will start to compare his or her body with others. Remind your child that people come in all shapes and sizes. It's also important that you don't compare your child's body with anyone else's body.

Talk soon. Talk often. A guide for parents talking to their kids about sex is an excellent (free) book available from http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Talk-soon-Talk-often

You can also show and discuss the Hormone Factory website with your child at <http://www.thehormonefactory.com/>

Education about growth and development is usually conducted at school during years 5, 6 and 7. Your child's teacher can give you more information about the content of these classes.

If you are concerned about your child's development you can talk with your local Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here)**, on **(insert number here)**.

School sores

School sores

Impetigo is an infection of the skin caused by bacteria. It will usually start with a blister or a group of blisters. The blisters will often pop, weep and form a crust. Small spots may spread outwards from the first spot. The spots are usually itchy.

If your child has impetigo they should be checked by a doctor. The doctor may prescribe antibiotics. You should cover the sores with watertight dressing and cut the child's nails to prevent them from scratching. Impetigo is spread very easily, so keep the child home until 24 hours after treatment has begun. Wash hands regularly to prevent spread to others.

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Scoliosis

Scoliosis

Scoliosis is an abnormal sideways curvature of the spine. It can be detected by a simple examination of the back.

The normal spine has three curves – one in the neck, one in the upper back and one in the lower back. These curves can be seen from the side, but when you look from behind the spine should appear straight. If the spine has a sideways curve, this is scoliosis.

An information leaflet about Scoliosis will be distributed to all year 6 and 7 students. Please read through the information provided and check your child for scoliosis as described in the leaflet.

If you have any concerns, please contact your General Practitioner or Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here)** on **(insert number here)**.

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• Screen time

• Screen time

- Children and adolescents should not spend more than two hours a day on screen based activities. Excessive screen time often leads to poor health, poor fitness and overweight.
- Activities like surfing the net, social networking, watching TV and playing screen games can be educational and fun, but all involve sitting still for long periods of time. Set family rules around screen time and encourage your child to try a range of active pastimes, especially during daylight hours.
- For more information, go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au>.
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Sleep

Sleep

School-aged children need 10 -11 hours sleep a night. Getting a good night's sleep will help your child to be more settled, happy and ready for school, and will strengthen his/her immune system. Here are some sleep tips:

- Have a bedtime routine – this will help your child wind down from the day.
- Keep the bedroom dark, cool and quiet - this will help your child drift off easily.
- If anxieties or worries are keeping your child from relaxing, acknowledge the feelings and deal with it straight away or plan to sort the issue out in the morning after a good night's sleep.

Remember, medication is not the answer to children's sleep problems.

Contact your local Community Health Nurse, (**insert name here**) on (**insert phone number here**), or go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> for more information.

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Sun safety

Sun safety

With the hot weather approaching, it is important to talk to your children about sun safety and teach them good sun protection habits.

- **Slip** on some sun-protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- **Slop** on broad spectrum, water resistant SPF30+ sunscreen. Put it on 20 minutes before you go outdoors and every two hours afterwards. Sunscreen should never be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.
- **Slap** on a hat that protects your face, head, neck and ears.
- **Seek** shade.
- **Slide** on some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards.

Extra care should be taken between 10am and 3pm when UV levels reach their peak.

For more information see the Cancer Council website: www.cancer.org.au.

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Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

There are many ways to be a good parent. Managing children's behaviour can be challenging at times, however it is an essential part of good parenting. The Triple P program may help you raise happy and confident children, through small changes and simple routines.

Triple P programs offered include:

- Seminar Series - a series of three 90-minute talks on:
 - children's behaviour - the tough part of parenting
 - raising confident children
 - raising emotionally resilient children
- Discussion Group – small, 2-hour groups on common behaviours such as misbehaving, fighting and aggression and hassle-free shopping with children.
- Group Triple P – an eight week course including five 2-hour sessions and three weeks of telephone support.

All programs are free to parents or carers with 3-8 year olds. To find out more, or to register in a program near you visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Triple_P or phone 1300 550 879.

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Parenting support

Parenting support

As parents, you are the most important person in your child's life.

Many parents find life with a child a joyful but challenging experience. Children's needs change as they grow and each stage brings new challenges. You may find the following resources helpful from time to time as you navigate some of these challenges as a parent:

- Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.com.au
- Healthy WA <http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-living/Parenting>
- Triple P - Positive Parenting Program www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Triple_P
- Ngala www.ngala.com.au/
- Child and Parent Centres <http://childandparentcentres.wa.edu.au/>

Vision and eyes

Vision and eyes

Good vision is important for learning and quality of life. Watch for any of the following in your child:

- covering/closing one eye when reading
- holding books very close
- complaining of eyestrain or headache
- complaining of double vision or blurred vision with reading or board viewing
- complaining of words moving on a page
- losing place when reading, or skipping words and lines
- inattention or short attention span when reading, or
- rubbing the eyes.

Please note: Medicare covers the cost of an eye examination.

If you have a concern about your child's vision please contact a doctor, optometrist or your local Community Health Nurse on **(insert number here)**.

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Water safety

Water safety

In Australia, drowning is the number one cause of death for children under five. To keep your children safe around water:

- Always stay with your children and watch carefully when they are near water, even if they can swim.
- Teach your children about water safety and make sure they learn how to swim.
- Have the whole family learn first aid.
- If you have a pool have it fenced with self-closing gates.
- Never leave them alone in the bath.

The Education Department offers low-cost VacSwim programs for school aged children. For more information on swimming lessons during summer via VacSwim go to www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculumsupport/swimming/detcms/portal/ and for water safety tips see www.lifesavingwa.com.au.

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Whooping cough

Whooping Cough

Whooping cough (Pertussis) is a bacterial infection. The infection is spread by droplets that are coughed or sneezed out. The illness usually starts with a runny nose and a cough, with long spells of coughing. The person will have many quick coughs in one spell and there will be an average of 25 coughing spells a day. After a spell, young children may 'whoop'. They may also vomit. The coughing spells will start to subside after several weeks.

If your child has whooping cough or has come in contact with whooping cough, see your doctor. Antibiotics are usually prescribed to treat whooping cough. Check that your child eats and drinks enough while they are sick.

The child should stay away from school until five days after starting treatment, or if not treated, for three weeks from the start of symptoms. Any children under seven who have not been immunised and have been in contact with someone with whooping cough should be kept away from school for 14 days after the contact, or until they have been on antibiotic treatment for at least five days.

For more information on whooping cough, see the fact sheet at [Healthy WA – Pertussis](#) or <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>

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Is your child of a healthy weight?

Is your child a healthy weight?

Did you know that more than a quarter of Western Australian school children are overweight? Many children at risk of being overweight do not look obviously large.

As children move through puberty and into adulthood, being overweight often becomes more obvious and more difficult to manage. It is easier for children to move towards a healthy weight before puberty and adulthood.

Help your child to introduce small, achievable, healthy habits every day. For some ideas, go to [Raising Children website](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/childhood_obesity.html) (http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/childhood_obesity.html). For fun ideas on how to support children and families to be more active outdoors go to [Nature Play WA](#).

It is important to avoid discussing weight with children. Weight loss and dieting is not recommended for children, unless under medical supervision. Healthy habits help children to 'grow into their weight'.

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Children and healthy weight

Children and healthy weight

Our modern society makes it very easy for children to gain too much weight too quickly. More than a quarter of Western Australian children are overweight by the time they start school. It is so common that it is difficult to tell what is 'normal' anymore as overweight children may not look noticeably large.

The good news is that simple lifestyle changes for children and families help everyone. Think about changes that could work for your family, such as:

- more active play (try stopping at a park on the way home from school)
- walking to school two or three times each week
- plan active outings on the weekend
- make food portions a little smaller
- cut out some food treats
- provide fewer soft drinks and fruit juices.

It is important to avoid discussing weight with children. Weight loss or dieting is not recommended for children, unless under medical supervision. Newly adopted healthy habits will help overweight children to 'grow into their weight' over time.

Overweight – What should I do if my child seems to be overweight?

Overweight - What should I do if my child seems overweight?

The key is to balance the food eaten with physical activity and your child's growth and development. Following are some tips to help your child and the family feel healthy, together.

Reduce the amount of screen time children have. Create family rules about screen time and encourage everyone to be more physically active. As a guide, school age children should spend no more than 2 hours per day on screen based recreation activities (e.g. television, tablets, gaming devices, social media). Helpful screen time management tips can be found at <http://raisingchildren.net.au>.

Encourage and involve the whole family in physical activities where possible. Try playing active games or sport, walking to school, visiting local playgrounds, throwing a Frisbee or walking the dog.

'Treat' foods high in fat and sugar need to be limited. Encourage your child to see 'treat' food, such as cakes, chips, biscuits and ice cream as food which should be eaten only occasionally.

Watch the portion sizes eaten at mealtimes. Put slightly smaller amounts on the plate.

No child should be put on a weight loss diet, unless the diet is being supervised by a doctor or dietitian. If you are worried about your child's weight, talk to your doctor or Community Health Nurse, **(insert name here, insert number here)**.

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What is body mass index (BMI)?

What is body mass index (BMI)?

The body mass index (BMI) is a simple measure which helps to keep track of weight status. The BMI does not directly measure body fat, but is a useful predictor of the proportion of fat in the body for most people. Research has shown that BMI results which are too low or too high are linked to increased risk of ill health during childhood, as well as later in life.

For more information about BMI, go to www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_bmi/about_childrens_bmi.html

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