

## How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread." This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

## How to Stop the Spread of Germs

In a nutshell: take care to

- Cover your mouth and nose
- Clean your hands often
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too

### Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

### Clean and wash your hands often

It is recommend that when you wash your hands - with soap and warm water - that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds.

### Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

## Germs and Children

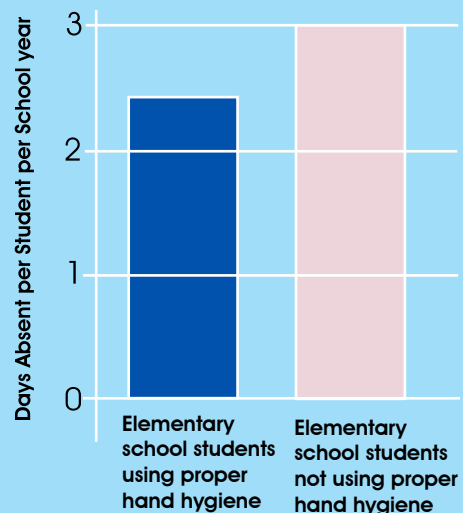
Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school. The flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools. As we all know there were also a measles outbreak this year at our schools and a huge amount of school days were missed due to crossover infections from child to child. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.

## Personal Hygiene

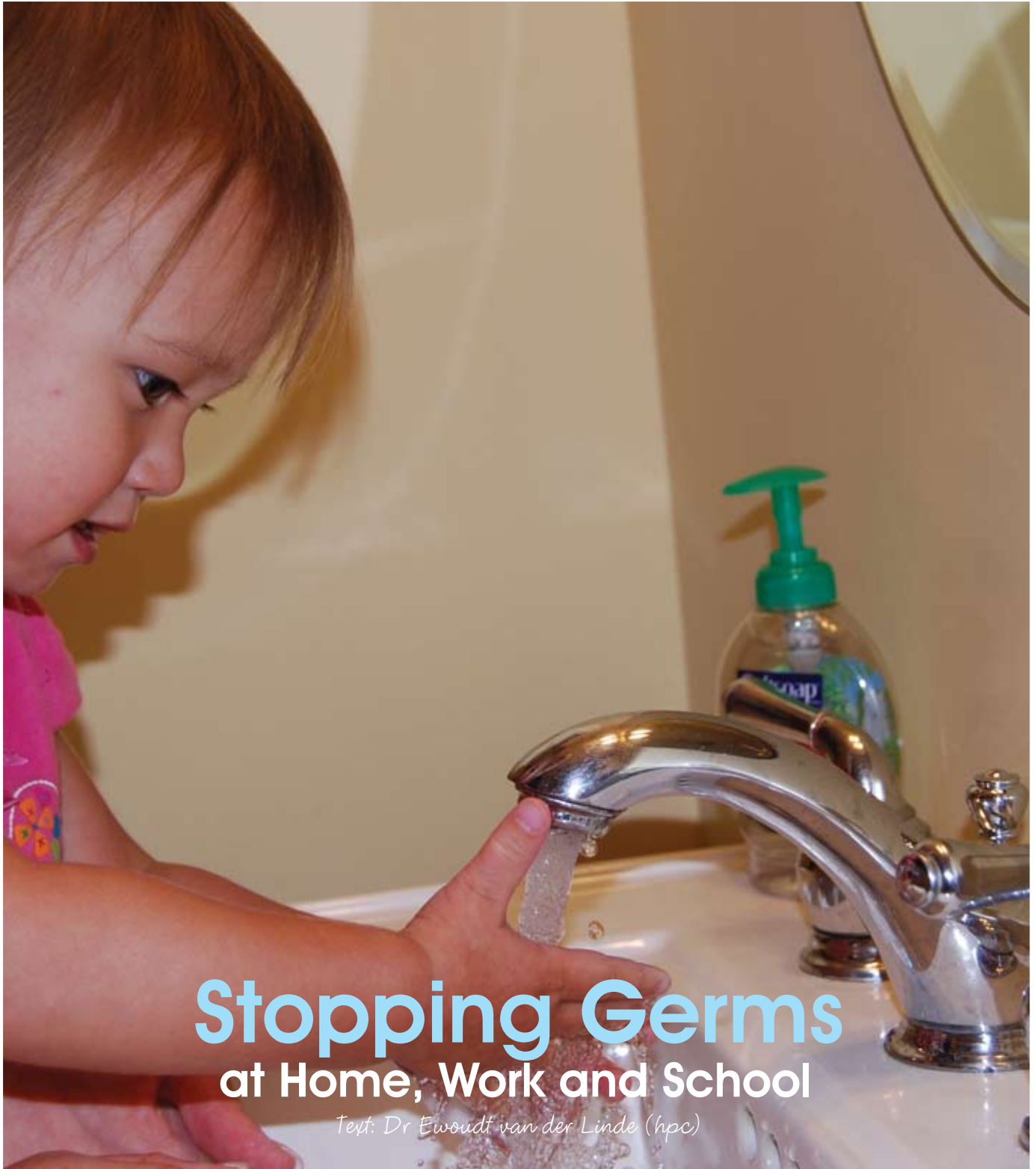
Personal hygiene is the basic concept of cleaning, grooming and caring for our bodies. While it is an important part of our daily lives at home, personal hygiene isn't just about combed shiny hair and brushed teeth; it's important for worker health and safety in the workplace. Workers who pay attention to personal hygiene can prevent the spread of germs and disease, reduce their exposures to chemicals and contaminants, and avoid developing skin allergies, skin conditions, and chemical sensitivities.

The first principle of good hygiene is to avoid an exposure by forming a barrier over the skin with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, coveralls, and boots. It is important to check the PPE often for excessive contamination, wear, tears, cuts, or pinholes. Workers should clean, decontaminate or replace protective equipment frequently to make sure it doesn't collect or absorb irritants. If protective equipment becomes too soiled during the job, the worker should stop and replace it with clean equipment.

### Cleaning Hands Keeps Students In School



References: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



# Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

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## Fast Facts

### Stop the Spread of Germs in Schools

- Approximately 1/5 of the U.S. population attends or works in schools. (U.S. Dept of Ed, 1999).
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. (Ansari, 1988; Scott and Bloomfield, 1989)
- Nearly 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold alone. (CDC, 1996)
- Addressing the spread of germs in schools is essential to the health of our youth, our schools, and our nation.
- Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year 🌈