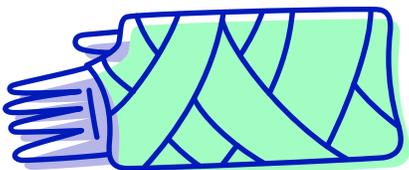


ILLNESS



ILLNESS

Section 1: Overview

Our bodies have a built in system called the immune system and it's our body's defense against infections. The immune system attacks germs and helps keep us healthy through many different parts.

The immune system has a network of parts that work together to detect, identify and fight against possible infections. The system is able to detect the difference between our body's healthy cells and 'foreign' cells that cause infections. The system also has a great memory and once the body has recovered from an infection.

From a cold to a cut, our immune system works hard to heal our bodies and keep us healthy. We can make this job easier for our immune systems by lending a helping hand by knowing some ways to take care of ourselves such as bandaging a cut to prevent infections, getting vaccinated, or even just washing our hands regularly.



Section 2: Wash Your Hands

How to wash your hands?

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold, not hot).
- Use soap. Lather up for about 20 seconds. Any soap works.
- Make sure you wash in between your fingers, on the backs of your hands, and under your nails where germs like to hang out. Don't forget your wrists!
- Rinse and dry well with a clean towel.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washing hands is the easiest and best way to prevent getting sick! By properly washing hands, we can stop the spreading of germs into ourselves as well as to other people.



WASHING HANDS

When should I wash my hands?

- before eating and cooking
- after using the bathroom
- after cleaning around the house
- after touching pets and other animals
- before and after visiting or taking care of sick people
- after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- after being outside



Don't have soap and water?

Waterless hand sanitizers are a good alternative. They come as liquids, wipes, sprays, or towelettes. You can buy these in travel sizes for bringing on-the-go.

Section 3: Vaccinations

Vaccinations are a preventative treatment that helps make our bodies and immune system stronger against fighting infections. This is done by introducing a similar, weakened or dead variety of the virus or bacteria. Our immune system works to identify the family of virus or bacteria. As a result, our bodies learn to fight against this family and can help prevent more deadly versions of virus or bacteria from making us sick.

Most vaccinations are given through a shot which can be scary. However, a prick on the arm is a small price to pay to help prevent serious illness that can bring even more discomfort.

Vaccinations are very safe.

You may feel a few small side effects, but these side effects are far safer than getting the disease it prevents. Side effects can include soreness, redness, swelling in the area of the shot, or a low-grade fever.

There is a very rare chance of having a bad reaction to a vaccine. If you've had reactions to vaccines in the past, let your doctor know. Before getting a vaccine, discuss any concerns that you have about it with your doctor.

DID YOU KNOW?



It's never too late to get up to date with vaccinations. Consult your doctor to schedule your vaccinations!



TIPS FOR SURVIVING SHOTS!



- **Distract yourself while waiting.** Books and music can help pass the time and distract yourself from any worries you may have.
- **Take slow, deep breaths.** Concentrate on breathing. This will help you relax both your muscles and your mind.
- **Focus your eyes.** Find a picture, poster, or sign in the vaccination room to focus intently on. Concentrate on the details to distract yourself while getting vaccinated.
- **Relax your arm.** A tense muscle can cause shots to hurt more.
- **Communicate.** Let the vaccine administrator know that you are nervous. They are trained medical professionals so they'll be able to help. If you feel funny or light headed afterwards, let them know and take a moment to sit or lay down until you feel better.

Why do I need vaccines?

It may not seem like a big deal to miss a vaccine, but being up to date on your shots has many benefits.

- **Protection one little “ouch” moment protects us from some major health problems.** For example, older teens and adults who get diseases like mumps may be at risk for side effects of the illness, such as infertility (the inability to have children).
- **Vaccinations are about protecting us in the future, not just as a kid.** Many of the diseases that we are vaccinated against when we’re kids — like hepatitis B or tetanus — actually affect more adults than kids. Plus, anyone can get “kid diseases” like chickenpox, and they can be far more dangerous to teens and adults than they are to little kids.
- **Vaccines can save your life.** Hepatitis B attacks the liver and can eventually kill. The HPV vaccine can protect against several types of cancer.

Section 4: The Flu

The Flu is the common name for influenza, a viral infection of the nose, throat, and lungs.

Flu season starts in October and ends in the following May. Millions of people across the U.S. come down with the flu affecting people in every age group. Luckily, most people will typically recover relatively quickly with proper care, especially children and teens.

Unfortunately, flu viruses mutate (change) each year. Thankfully every year, scientists work very hard to develop vaccines to help prevent the upcoming year’s flu strain (variety). However, while the flu vaccine is very good at protecting against the flu, it’s not 100%. And it only works against some types of the virus. If a new flu type appears, the vaccine may not protect against it.

PREVENTING THE FLU

- Wash your hands
- The flu vaccine



The Yearly Flu Shot

- Every year, scientists work very hard to develop vaccines to help prevent the upcoming year’s flu strain. However, while the flu vaccine is very good at protecting against the flu, it’s not 100%. And it only works against some types of the virus. If a new flu type appears, a person who’s had the vaccine may not be protected against it.
- A few people who get the vaccine might get the flu, but it will be much milder and go away sooner than if they hadn’t been vaccinated.
- The best time to get the flu vaccine is October. This helps your body learn how to fight the oncoming flu strain before the winter flu season.



Section 5: Talk to your doctor

Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor. You're probably used to answering your doctor's questions – not asking your own. But you have the right to ask questions too. In fact, you should: It's your body.

It's good practice to prepare for your doctor visit. Having a list of questions or topics you want to bring up can help your doctor get a better understanding of you, your body, and your health.

REMEMEBER: Doctors and nurses are trained medical professionals, but they're still people! They can't read your mind and don't know everything you've been experiencing. It is in your best interest to be open and honest with anything you think may need medical opinions. Plus the more questions you ask, the more you'll discover about your body. And when you know what's going on with your body, you can take better control of your own health – today and in the future.



HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Questions for open communication:

- Will you keep my information confidential?
- Is it OK for me to see you without my parents in the room?
- Can I see you without my parents knowing about the visit?

Questions for illness or symptom:

- What's wrong with me?
- Can you draw me a picture or show me what's wrong?
- What causes this type of problem?
- Is this serious?
- Will there be any long-term effects of this problem?
- Can I give this illness to someone else, and if so, how and for how long?
- Are there any activities or foods I should avoid until I'm better?
- When can I return to school or work?
- How can I prevent this from happening again?

Questions about medicines:

- What does this medicine do?
- What happens if I don't take it?
- When should I stop taking the medicine?
- What are the side effects?
- What side effects or changes should I report to you?
- How long should I take it?
- What if I accidentally miss a dose?
- If I don't notice any improvement, how long should I wait before calling you?

Questions about tests:

- Why is this test needed?
- How soon should I get the test?
- What will happen if I don't get the test?
- Are there any risks involved?
- Will it hurt? If so, is there anything we can do to lessen the pain?
- Can it be performed in your office, or will I need to go to a lab?
- How should I prepare?
- Are there any side effects?
- What side effects or changes should I report to you?