

Safeguarding at More House

Parent Bulletin May 2017

Personal Hygiene and Eye Health

Maintaining personal hygiene is necessary for many reasons: health, personal, social, psychological or simply as a means of life. Personal hygiene may be described as the key to maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body. Teaching children about good hygiene is the best way to avoid the spread of infection.

Hand Washing and Nails

Hand-washing is the single most important factor relating to the spread of infection, not just for children but for adults of all ages. Your daughter should be encouraged to wash her hands before eating, after using the toilet and after handling animals. Nail biting should be discouraged, particularly if the nails are being swallowed. The nails and nail beds offer a perfect environment for germs to live and breed. Nail biting permits the transfer of these bugs to the mouth and through to the digestive tract, causing many problems. Keeping nails short will help to reduce the amount of germs under the nail.

Head Lice

They are very common in school children and usually cause sufferers to have an itchy scalp, which can become sore or dry from excessive scratching. They are difficult to see due to their small size and often disguise themselves by being of a similar colour to their host's hair. The eggs are even smaller, appearing near to the root and are quite dull in appearance. A weekly check of the head using a fine-toothed nit comb should determine whether head lice are present.

Female lice can lay several eggs in the hair, which will not hatch until seven days have passed. These eggs take a further seven days to mature, at which point they can lay their own eggs. This cycle shows how quickly infestations can build up. There are many products available from the chemist, who will be able to advise on the most appropriate selection. Some require use on wet hair, others dry – it is important to follow the instructions properly. As the eggs hatch seven days after being laid, a repeat application is normally required after this time, as often the eggs are not harmed by the solution.

New recommendations suggest that as the lice are becoming more resistant to the lotions, an alternative technique should be used. Try smothering hair in normal hair conditioner and brushing to remove tangles, then section by section use the nit comb, wiping clean with every stroke. The lice cannot grip when the hair is covered with conditioner. This process should be repeated every day until the lice have been eliminated; this also reduces exposure to pesticides.

Hair should be kept tied back when at school or in a social gatherings. It is sensible to keep hair short, with shoulder length being acceptable for girls. Head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene or of social class as myth suggests. Lice can affect anyone and should be treated as soon as possible to prevent the spread to others.

Oral Hygiene

Diet plays a very important role in the prevention of tooth and gum conditions. Products that are high in sugar are particularly dangerous for your teeth. Sugar causes an excessive production of

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plaque, which puts teeth at risk of decay. It also produces higher levels of acid that can cause erosion of the teeth.

Avoidance of dark food and drinks, such as black coffee and blackcurrant can help to prevent teeth from becoming discoloured. Regular visits to the dentist will ensure that any conditions are diagnosed early and can be treated with minimal effort.

Brushing and flossing the teeth should be an integral part of your everyday routine. The toothbrush should not be too firm, so that it is not pliable and cannot accommodate the small crevices between and around the teeth. Flossing is an additional method of ensuring debris between the teeth that a toothbrush cannot reach is removed and plaque levels are kept to a minimum.

Eye Health

Some tips for healthy eye sight:

- Have regular check-ups with an optician, every two years or sooner if there are signs of changes. These could include (but are not limited to) complaints of headaches, rubbing eyes, tiredness, sudden drop in academic achievement.
- Practice the 20-20-20 protocol when working: every 20 minutes of close work, give your eyes a 20 second rest by looking at something 20 feet away.
- Always remove eye make-up thoroughly and do not share eye make-up with friends.
- Wear good quality sunglasses with UV protection when it is sunny. Never look directly into the sun.
- Regular play and exercise can help with eye health. Studies show two hours of outdoor activity a day is ideal for healthy eyes.
- Eat healthily and drink enough fluids.