

DECLARE WAR ON GERMS

As toddlers take their first steps and venture out in the real world, parents learn that it's place full of bacteria, viruses, and other germs. Exposure to various illnesses only intensifies when children start school.

Although it's impossible to eliminate all contact with germs, there are some actions parents can take to minimize the number of germs their children encounter. Here are some tips for parents to follow to declare a war on germs.

- Wash your hands before eating or preparing foods.
- Wipe your kitchen countertops frequently with a disinfectant. Use a nontoxic disinfectant around children.
- Keep food at the appropriate temperatures to prevent growth of bacteria.
- When packing school lunches, wrap everything. Teach children to hold their food so they touch only the wrapping.
- When dining or cooking together, discourage handling food back and fourth; this can spread germs.
- Toys that are shared should be wiped off at least once a day, more often if children are at the age where they put them in their mouth.
- For toys that cannot be wiped off, parents should discourage sharing. If your child is sick, have them select one stuffed animal to play with during that time.
- Disinfect the surfaces of playpens and trays from highchairs.
- Thoroughly wash your hands after going to the bathroom.
- Toothbrushes should be changed monthly and discarded after a cold or other illness.

Following these tips will help you and your family, keep from passing germs and bacteria back and fourth to each other. Declare war now!