

## Keeping Kids Healthy: Immune System Boosters for Daily Living

\*Ensure plenty of rest: On average, a child needs 10-14 hours of sleep, preferably in a cool, dark room - and away from distractions of computers, tablets and mobile phones. This is when the immune system really does its work!

\*Fresh air is free: Nature is our best remedy! It is free, and boosts the immune system. Mud puddles, trails and beaches are open for business! Head out into the big outdoors - let kids run, cycle, climb and explore...let their time outdoors be measured in terms of hours rather than minutes...without rushing. Be their quiet companion....let their interest lead!

\*Have fun with them: Healthy immune systems thrive on low stress, including unhurried time spent with those who love and care about them. Choose things to do together that are mutually enjoyable....play together, work on projects together...take time to listen, and to communicate that they are appreciated, safe and loved.

\*Have a family routine: Children thrive on a stable environment, and creating a consistent family routine supports emotional security. Having meals, baths, stories, homework, time for play and bedtime at generally predictable times can be extremely beneficial.

\*Eat together: Sharing pleasant mealtime together as a family, even a family of two, builds strong family relationships that in turn build strong, healthy immune systems.

\*Reduce sugar: Studies show that sugar suppresses immune function. There are no nutrients in sugar....sugar also stops white blood cells from doing their job properly. Consider choosing fruit rather than refined sugar, for healthy treats that nourish growing minds and bodies.

\*Hand hygiene: Teach your child when and how to wash hands...before meals, after visiting the toilet, and any other time that common items are shared by hand...wash for 20 seconds....sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" while you wash. Hand sanitizer works as well as an alternative when needed...but 20 seconds with soap & water does the trick!

\*Environment: A healthy environment in the home is beneficial to every child and adult in the family....including the air that we breathe. Eliminate second hand smoke exposure...keep living and play areas clean....crack windows open to circulate fresh air within the home.

\*Immune-boosting foods & snacks for kids: Foods that contain vitamin C are known to improve immune function...broccoli, carrots, strawberries and oranges. Foods containing omega fatty acids also assist in fighting illness...fish, nuts, fortified eggs & milk, beans, grass fed meat and dairy. Good quality, low sugar yogurt provides probiotic benefits, as well as a great source of calcium. In general....eating a variety of whole foods in as close to their natural state as possible, is a great guideline for nourishing a healthy immune system.

