

## Clean Body



Parents play the most important role in helping students develop healthy body habits. Encouraging regular physical activity through fun and engaging activities, such as family bike rides, walks, or dance parties, not only promotes fitness, but also instills a lifelong appreciation for movement. Alongside physical activity, parents are also pivotal in modeling the importance of proper hygiene practices, including handwashing, dental care, and bathing. By establishing consistent routines and offering gentle reminders, parents help children understand the connection between exercise, hygiene, and overall health, helping kids build healthy habits that will last them a lifetime!

## Clean Mind



According to a study published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology, spending as little as 20 minutes in nature can help lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone<sup>1</sup>. Beyond the physiological effects, research also shows that outdoor activities can foster emotional resilience and family cohesion. In fact, findings from the Journal of Outdoor Recreation Education & Leadership suggests that families who engage in outdoor recreation together report higher levels of satisfaction with family relationships and communication<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes the importance of outdoor play in helping to reduce symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and improving overall mental well-being in children<sup>3</sup>. This month, make time for your mind—outside!

## Clean Earth



**Earth Day is Monday, April 22nd** – and there are countless ways your family can make a positive impact!

Consider organizing a family cleanup day in your neighborhood or local park. Another fun activity is planting a family garden. Additionally, you can reduce your carbon footprint by committing to energy-saving practices like turning off lights when not in use, conserving water, and reducing single-use plastics. Earth Day is another opportunity to model those healthy habits, like conservation, and instill them in the next generation.

### Sources:

- 1– <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/a-20-minute-nature-break-relieves-stress#:~:text=Spending%20at%20least%2020%20to,didn%27t%20affect%20stress%20levels>
- 2– [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374963901\\_The\\_Influence\\_of\\_Parents%27\\_Outdoor\\_Recreation\\_Preferences\\_on\\_Children%27s\\_Outdoor\\_Activities\\_in\\_State\\_Parks](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374963901_The_Influence_of_Parents%27_Outdoor_Recreation_Preferences_on_Children%27s_Outdoor_Activities_in_State_Parks)
- 3– <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/health--safety-tips/aap-offers-tips-for-keeping-kids-active-healthy-through-outdoor-play/>
- 4– <https://www.eatright.org/food/home-food-safety/wash-and-separate-foods/should-you-wash-all-food>

## Clean Food

Washing is one of the primary ways to reduce risk of food poisoning. From hands to kitchen counters, it is important to wash properly to stop the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses. However, when it comes to food, the rules of washing are not as clear!<sup>4</sup>

### Always Wash:

**Fruits and Vegetables** – Wash all produce, even if the peel will not be eaten, because dirt and bacteria can be transferred from the peel to the inside of the fruit as it is sliced or peeled. All produce, even organic, should be washed with cool tap water immediately before eating or using in a recipe. Skip the soap because the porous surfaces on fresh produce can absorb the ingredients in soap.

### Never Wash:

**Raw Meat** – Despite what many think, washing raw chicken, fish, and other meats does not clean it. In fact, rinsing raw meat may spread harmful bacteria such as Salmonella around the kitchen and increases the risk of cross-contamination to other foods, utensils, and surfaces. The only way to kill those pathogens is to cook all meat and fish to their appropriate internal temperature.

**Eggs** – Avoid washing eggs after purchase because it can remove the coating (applied during processing) that protects eggs from bacteria.