

immunity boosters

..... for the whole fam

BY SUZANNA PALMER

Chills, fever, body aches, sore throat—there are few things worse than the feelings that come with the flu, especially when it's your child who is suffering. Thankfully, there are choices you can make now to keep your kids (and yourself!) healthy during this season of sniffles.

"Like what?" you ask. Like these essentials below, shared by Dr. Lee Belvin, a 14-year-veteran in the world of pediatric medicine and the newest addition to East Cobb Pediatrics. "To help keep a child healthy, it's crucial to promote total body wellness," says Dr. Belvin. "That's how you protect the body from certain viruses, like the flu and colds."

Wondering what a lifestyle of "total body wellness" looks like? Here we've compiled Dr. Belvin's immunity-boosting good-for-you-guidelines.



Soap Up: So, what's Dr. Belvin's number one tip? It's one we've heard a million times before, and for good reason. "Washing hands often is the number one way to stay healthy," he shares. If you're on the go, alcohol-based sanitizers can cleanse in a pinch, but Dr. Belvin says that soap and water are optimal.

Get Personal: This tip may be our favorite. Of course we all treasure quality time with our children, but did you know that meaningful cuddles and chats could actually promote good health? "Studies show that when it comes to the overall health and wellness

“meaningful chats could actually promote good health.”



of a child, of which a strong immune system is a part, having a good relationship with your child is key," says Dr. Belvin. "Sit down, have dinner together, and talk about the day's happenings."

Eat Right: And speaking of mealtimes, you know that you should give your kids nutritious foods. But busy schedules can sideline even the best intentions. The next time you're tempted to swing into the drive-through lane, remember this: "Children who aren't getting the nutrients they need or are overweight are not going to have the immune systems they should have," Dr. Belvin shares. "This will make them more susceptible to things like the flu."

Move It: Along the same lines, active lifestyles are also linked to overall stronger immune systems. "Ideally, your child should have 60 minutes of activity each day," says Dr. Belvin. "It doesn't have to be organized sports, just something to keep them moving where they're not sitting in front of a computer, iPad, or video game."

Sleep Smart: After all that healthy activity, make sure your kids consistently get enough z's. Sleep and immunity are tightly linked. "Getting the recommended amount of sleep keeps you from being as susceptible to infections, and if you do get sick, adequate sleep helps fight the infections faster," says Dr. Belvin.

So, how much is enough? The Center for Disease Prevention and Control recommends that 1- to 3-year-olds get 12 to 14 hours; 3- to 5-year-olds, 11 to 13 hours; 5- to 10-year-olds get 10 or 11 hours; and 10- to 17-year-olds, 8.5 to 9.5 hours.

And, last but not least, realize that occasional bouts with sniffles and sore throats are inevitable. "You can't put your kids in a bubble," says Dr. Belvin. "They will be exposed to things, but fortunately, kids are resilient and they heal quickly"—especially if you've been promoting a lifestyle of wellness all along. ●

Call 770-795-4553 to make an appointment with Dr. Belvin at the **NEWLY RELOCATED!** (after Nov. 1) Kennesaw office of East Cobb Pediatrics, located at 6110 Pine Mountain Road, Suite 202, 30152; or visit eastcobbpediatrics.com. Also located at 1121 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 220, in Marietta, 30068; 770-977-0094.



Dr. Lee Belvin.
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