

## Health & Hygiene Matters when Starting School

Starting college, a new semester, or returning to school after a hiatus can affect not only your mental health but your physical health as well.

Practicing good personal hygiene can go a long way to prevent yourself from becoming ill during what can often be a stressful time. What is personal hygiene anyway?

What is Hygiene?

Hygiene is defined as a comprehensive plan for preserving individual and community health in all its dimensions. Implementing such practices are particularly important on college campuses where students often live in close quarters and move from one building or classroom to another every day.

Some people have rarely traveled before leaving home to go to college. In contrast, universities often draw students from around the globe. People who have grown up in different cultures are used to different hygiene practices. Regardless of culture or habit, there are some key habits and precautions that every student can take to avoid illness.

*Use our back to school checklist to prepare for good health while settling in on campus. . .*



### *Center for Health & Hygiene in the Home & Community*

The Center for Health and Hygiene in the Home and Community serves as a national and international resource for information and education, applied research, professional training and conferences. The Center focuses on issues relating to hygiene and infection control in areas such as:

- consumer food safety
- home hygiene
- daycare
- preschool
- homecare
- sports and leisure activity
- travel and hospitality

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### *Center for Health & Hygiene in the Home & Community*

Back to School Hygiene  
Tips for  
College Students



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## Recommended Back to College Check List

There are many things to remember to bring when leaving for school. There are a few essential items to pack items that will help you create a healthful environment for yourself and others. Proper clothing and bedding are important for your personal comfort

### Clothing:

Pack appropriate seasonal clothing including clothes that you can layer for when fall days change quickly from warm to cold and vice versa.

Comfortable walking shoes

### Clean Bedding:

Bring enough clean bedding to keep warm including:

Twin size comforter

Extra long twin size sheets

Bed pillows

Extra blanket

Mattress cover or foam pad for added comfort

### **Cleaning tips**

Once you arrive on campus you'll need to clean your dorm room or apartment on a regular, basis to get rid of bacteria and other germs. It doesn't take long for germs to build up on seemingly clean household surfaces. Research shows that bacteria that cause gastrointestinal illness can be found on many surfaces especially counter tops, sinks, dish cloths and sponges, fridge shelves, entryways, toilet bowl and toilet surface. A good rule thumb is to focus cleaning on food contact surfaces, including the



Keep a regular cleaning schedule to avoid lingering harmful bacteria

'fridge & microwave, bathroom & toilet surfaces and shared hand contact surfaces such as key boards and desk tops. A few things you'll need include to keep your new home clean include:

### Cleaning Supplies:

Mop/Broom

Hand Vacuum

Sponge

Paper towels

Soap or bleach and water solution

### Laundry Needs:

Laundry basket/hamper

Laundry cleaning supplies—

When washing clothes, it is important to use a laundry detergent in order to rid the clothes of odor, soil, dirt, and bacteria.

Drying rack—avoid putting clothes away damp which can invite mildew and mold

Wash your bedding regularly to remove debris and avoid dust mites.



### **Personal Hygiene**

Maintaining good personal hygiene also helps fight infection by removing substances that allow bacteria to grow on the surface of your skin. Personal hygiene includes health practices such as bathing, handwashing, washing your hair, brushing your teeth, and washing your clothes. Bathing and showering daily with soap helps remove dirt, dead skin cells, and body odor.

### Bathing/Hygiene Necessities:

Hair care products—Shampoo helps remove oils from your hair and head, and may reduce dandruff.

Bath towels and washcloths

Portable shower caddy so you'll have everything you

need stored in one convenient place

Bathrobe

Bathing Products—Soap/ Bath Gel. Soap sticks to the oils and dirt on your skin to help remove them and lessen the chances for bacteria growth.

Hand sanitizer

Dental care products—a new toothbrush should be purchased every three months. Taking good care of your mouth and teeth ensures healthy teeth and eliminates bacteria in your mouth that can cause bad breath.

Deodorants

Feminine hygiene products

Kleenex

Flip flops. Wear non-slip flip flops in dorm bathrooms and showers to protect your feet from unwanted foot fungal diseases and cutting your feet on rough surfaces.

Over the door hook—these can be handy and easily stored in your bathroom caddy

Hair Dryer

Shaving supplies

### **Emergency Planning**

Lastly, it is important to have a few safety items on hand in your room in case of emergency. Keep at these items stored together in an easily accessible location, a plastic tote bin works well:

First-aid kit

Flashlight

Batteries

Sewing kit



Wear flip flops in shared showers to avoid getting foot fungus.

### **Resources**

Stop by your school's health center for additional health and hygiene information.