

Back to school

Last updated: **August 2024**

As summer draws to a close, it is time to get the kids ready for a new school year. For many families, the transition can be challenging. There is plenty you can do to help your child adjust and stay safe and healthy at any stage. Make sure that your child practices healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating, keeping physically active and getting enough sleep. Keep up regular visits to their health care providers and ensure immunizations are up-to-date. Check in with your child's mental health and help your child manage the stress of new routines and social situations.

Learn how to help your child stay safe and learn healthy lifestyle habits this school year.

COVID-19 safe schools

For the 2024/2025 school year, students and staff are in the classroom full time. For more information, visit:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Schools](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Communicable Disease Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

Featured topics

Bullying

Bullying can happen in all kinds of situations. It can be physical, verbal, social or online. Learn about bullying, including how to know if your child is being bullied or is bullying:

- [Bullying](#)
- [Bullying: Building a Child's Self-Esteem](#)
- [Bullying: How to Help Your Child Who Bullies](#)
- [Bullying: Signs a Child Is Bullied](#)

Childhood immunizations

Getting your child immunized can help save lives. Immunizations help your immune system recognize and quickly kill bacteria and viruses that can cause serious illness or death. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine is offered to all students in grade 6. The meningococcal quadrivalent vaccine is offered to all students in grade 9. Learn about the routine immunizations offered in B.C.:

- [Childhood Vaccines are Safe \(HealthLinkBC File #50c\)](#)
- [Grade 6 Immunizations in B.C. \(HealthLinkBC File #50f\)](#)
- [Grade 9 Immunizations in B.C. \(HealthLinkBC File #50g\)](#)
- [Immunizations](#)
- [The Benefits of Immunizing Your Child \(HealthLinkBC File #50b\)](#)

Healthy eating

Creating healthy eating habits from an early age is an important part of your child's growth and development. Learn about healthy eating, including healthy beverage choices and meal and snack ideas:

- [Sugary Drinks and Other Beverages](#)
- [Healthy Eating for Children and Youth](#)
- [Lunches to Go \(HealthLinkBC File #69f\)](#)
- [Quick Tips: Making Healthy Snacks](#)

For additional healthy eating information or advice you can also call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian or [Email a HealthLinkBC Dietitian](#).

Physical activity

Physical activity is an important part of your child's growth, development and overall health. Learn the types and amounts of physical activity children require each day and tips on how they can get and stay active:

- [Participation: Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
- [Helping Children with Disabilities Stay Active](#)
- [Physical Activity for Children and Teens](#)
- [Quick Tips: Getting Active as a Family](#)

For more physical activity information or advice you can also call **8-1-1** to speak with a [qualified exercise professional](#) or [Email Physical Activity Services](#).

Getting enough sleep

Getting enough sleep is important for children of all ages. Learn about why this is important, how much sleep children need, tips for having a healthier sleep and why your child might not be sleeping well:

- [Participation: Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
- [BC Children's Hospital: Sleeping Well](#)
- [Time for Bed \(HealthLinkBC File #92e\)](#)
- [Nightmares and Other Sleep Problems in Children](#)

Managing health concerns at school

If your child has health concerns such as asthma, allergies or diabetes, it is important that you make a plan for the time they are at school:

- [Allergy safe child care facilities \(HealthLinkBC File #100c\)](#)
- [Asthma: Educating Yourself and Your Child](#)
- [Diabetes in Children: Care Plan for School and Daycare](#)
- [Severe allergic reaction \(Anaphylaxis\)](#)

Mental health

Mental health issues can affect anyone regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity. Learn about mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders and what to do if you or someone you know needs help:

- [Mental and Behavioural Health \(Learning Centre\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: HelpStartsHere](#)

Routine checkups

As your child grows, it is important that they get regular checkups with their family doctor or nurse practitioner, eye doctor and dentist. Learn what routine health checkups your child should have:

- [Basic Dental Care](#)
- [Elementary School Age Children and Their Vision \(HealthLinkBC File #53b\)](#)
- [Medical Checkups for Adolescents](#)
- [Routine Checkups](#)

Sexual and reproductive health

Get information about sexual and reproductive health, such as how to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), birth control options and more:

- [Birth Control](#)
- [Emergency Contraception \(EC\) \(HealthLinkBC File #91b\)](#)
- [Preventing sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\) \(HealthLinkBC File #08o\)](#)
- [Sexual Health \(Learning Centre\)](#)

Starting a new school

Starting a new school can be scary. In some children, it can cause stress or anxiety as they struggle to fit in, make new friends and create a new routine. Get tips on how to help your child transition into a new school, develop social skills and self-esteem and deal with stress:

- [Help Your School-Age Child Develop Social Skills](#)
- [Helping Your Child Build Inner Strength](#)
- [Helping Your Child Transition Into Middle School or Junior High](#)
- [Stress in Children and Teenagers](#)

Staying safe

Whether your child is playing at the playground, walking to school or carrying a backpack, their safety is important. Learn how to help keep your child safe:

- [Child Safety: Street and Motor Vehicles](#)
- [Playground Safety](#)
- [Quick Tips: Helping Your Child Stay Safe and Healthy](#)
- [Quick Tips: Using Backpacks Safely](#)

Substance use

The childhood and teenage years are when children experience and try new things. While most of these experiences can be positive, some may be risky or unsafe. Make time to talk openly and honestly with your children about complex issues such as substance use and overdose. To learn more about alcohol and drug use in young people, visit:

- [Alcohol and Drug Use in Young People](#)
- [Be Drug Smart](#)
- [Naloxone: Treating opioid overdose \(HealthLinkBC File #118\)](#)
- [Quit Smoking](#)
- [Quitting smoking \(HealthLinkBC File #30c\)](#)
- [Substance Use Parenting Articles](#)

Your health authority

Get school-related health information from your health authority:

- [First Nations Health Authority: Returning to the classroom... Yes, it can cause anxiety!](#)
- [Fraser Health: School health](#)
- [Interior Health: Promoting Health of Children & Youth in School](#)
- [Island Health: School Age Health](#)
- [Northern Health: School & youth health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health: School health](#)

Useful websites

Erase bullying

ERASE bullying (Expect Respect and A Safe Education) is a Ministry of Education website that provides information about bullying, as well as information directed towards parents and youth. Visit their website to learn more:

- [Government of British Columbia: ERASE bullying](#)

Healthy Schools BC

Healthy Schools BC is a partnership of organizations working together on healthy school initiatives. The website has a collection of healthy school information, stories and resources from across B.C. to help support the health and learning of students. The website features the Teach Food First toolkit. This toolkit can be used by educators to help teach their students about food, nutrition and Canada's food guide:

- [Healthy Schools BC](#)
- [Healthy Schools BC: Teach Food First](#)

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/more/resources/healthlink-bc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.