



August 25, 2020

Back to School with Ambulance Paramedics of BC

The Ambulance Paramedics of BC are here today to share some tips and tricks on staying safe as the province prepares to head back to the classroom.

While we wait for all the finite details of what a classroom will look like this year, we know one thing for sure: hand hygiene, masks and physical distancing will be of paramount importance and a new reality for our students.

While older kids may have an easier time adapting to new safety measures, younger children may need more frequent reminders and tricks and tips to comply.

Hand Hygiene and Personal Care Tips:

- The best way to ensure your child maintains proper hand hygiene at school is to practice and model effective hand hygiene at home.
 - Research has shown us that children as young as three can understand the concept of germs. It's important that children are taught at home what the risks of not washing your hands are and good techniques for handwashing.
 - Demonstration/activity for kids: place a little bit of glitter on your child's hands and let them play with a few toys; after 10 minutes examine where the glitter is – all over the toys and likely their face and body as well (explain that like glitter, germs will stick to everything and that is why we wash our hands carefully)
- We all know by now we should be washing our hands for 20 seconds; to a young child 20 seconds can feel like an eternity, pass the time by singing a favourite song.
- If your child is old enough, include their own personal hand sanitizer in their lunch kit for them to have easy access to.
- To help children avoid touching their face, keep hair shorter or have long hair pulled back to reduce the temptation to adjust hair and touch face.

Mask Wearing Tips:

- Consider using sunglass lanyards on masks for younger children to avoid having masks dropped or lost.
- Consider personalizing a mask – a child or teenage may feel more comfortable in a mask that they have picked out themselves and reflects their individuality and personal style.
- Normalize masks by having parents and caregivers wearing them when going out to public spaces where physical distancing is hard to maintain.
- When wearing a mask, ensure it covers the nose and mouth.

Other Risks besides Coronavirus are still present!

- The pandemic and the changes Covid-19 have created for our school environment has become the number one safety concern for most students, parents and teachers – however, there are other risks children and parents need to remain aware of.
 - Vehicle traffic during school drop off and pick up increases and poses a risk for young pedestrians.

- Drivers have had an extra-long break from school zone speed limits this year, and may not be as vigilant.
- On their way to and from school children should:
 - Be visible – wear bright colours and reflective gear so others can see you!
 - Make sure traffic has stopped and make eye contact with drivers before stepping out.
 - When possible, walk on sidewalks or pathways. If you must walk on the road, never walk with your back to oncoming traffic.
 - Don't text and walk or cycle. If you are wearing headphones, keep one earbud out and the volume low. You need to see and *hear* what is going on around you.
- Pick up and drop off can be a very busy and hectic time. Follow these tips to help reduce the risk for children.
 - Children can be unpredictable and may not follow the rules of the road. Do not assume that a child will stop when appropriate – be extra vigilant when operating a vehicle around school zones.
 - Never call for your child from across the street. Children may assume that it is safe to cross without looking both ways and run into traffic.
 - Know the rules for your schools drop off and pick up area and follow them. These rules were put in place to keep kids safe and to keep traffic moving.

Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC

