Why do you wash your hands? Because the germs on your hands can make you sick. And because washing your hands regularly is the single best way to avoid illness. But you can’t wash the dirt and germs away with water alone – you need warm water AND soap to rinse away bacteria. Regular hand soap doesn’t actually kill germs, but it makes them “slippery” so the warm water can easily slide the germs right off your hands. So soap up your hands, pull them out of the water stream, and rub them all over for at least ten or fifteen seconds, and then rinse off thoroughly. If you’re in a public place, be careful not to touch anything after you’ve rinsed – use a paper towel (or your elbow) to turn off the water and open the door.

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In a 2010 observational study, 85% of American adults washed their hands after using a public restroom.
Every vitamin does something special for your health. Vitamin C boosts your immune system and helps keep your gums healthy. Good sources of vitamin C (besides OJ) include broccoli, red peppers, papaya, cauliflower, and strawberries.

Hiking is great exercise, no matter where you do it. Are there snow-capped peaks or rushing mountain streams nearby? Go for it! But hiking is just as fun and just as good for you at your local park or reservoir or anywhere else where there’s even a small plot of open land and a little bit of daylight. And hiking is an activity that the whole family can enjoy any time of year – in fact, a vigorous hike feels even better when the weather is chilly!

The U.S. citrus growing season runs from November to June, so citrus fruits – lemons, oranges, grapefruit, limes, and all the variations, like clementines and tangerines – are at their juiciest and sweetest when the weather is coldest.

The amount of time that kids can focus on homework increases with age. A teenager might be able to stay on task for an hour or two, but a first grader may max out at 15 minutes. Regular breaks can keep a kid of any age focused and productive.

Well-fed students pay better attention in class, participate more enthusiastically, and even behave better. So, sure, they learn more readily.

That’s why we prepare and serve nutritious meals for your kids at school: to provide support to the teachers who do the heavy lifting of educating our students. If we can make sure that kids come to class ready to learn, we’ve helped our teachers accomplish their all-important jobs.

Please join us in saying thanks to our teachers during American Education Week, November 15-19. But let’s not stop there. Let’s also make sure that when our kids get to the classroom they are well-fed – and hungry to learn.

This newsletter is provided as a wellness resource by our school system’s School Meals Program.