



spotlight on health

Prevention Is Key To Avoiding Infectious Disease

by Judy Robinson

Executive Director of the National Association of School Nurses (NAPSA)—When I was a school

nurse, I saw first-hand how one sick child could start a chain reaction of illness as it spread among classmates, teachers and visitors to school. As a mother of two young children, I also saw how those same illnesses could walk in the door at the end of the school day and infect brothers and sisters, mom and dad. The good news is that with a little bit of common sense and a lot of follow through, you can cut down on the spread of illness-causing germs and break the chain of transmission.

Start by recognizing that children spend about one-third of their day in school, which is ample time to get exposed to infectious germs like the Rhinovirus—the leading cause of the common cold—and bring them home. The average child will come down with five to twelve colds per year, and 90 percent of US households get at least one cold each year.

I recently participated in a Healthy School summit conducted by the maker of Lysol® Brand disinfectant products. I worked with other health experts to identify ways to cut down on the spread of germs in school and at home. We discussed the following tips, which are easy for parents, teachers and kids to follow:

- **Begin and end with hand washing.** School children should wash their hands thoroughly sev-



eral times a day, and especially before and after eating and using the bathroom. It's also a good idea to have them wash their hands as soon as they come home from school.

- **No sharing allowed!** Children should never share food or drinks at home, school or on the go. Remember: sharing that water bottle at soccer practice means sharing germs, too.

- **Disinfect hot spots.** Teachers and parents should use an EPA registered disinfectant such as Lysol brand products to kill germs on commonly touched surfaces like doorknobs, keyboards, telephones and countertops in school classrooms and at home.

- **Dispose of germs once and for all.** Be sure to throw away tissues and paper cups immediately after use.

Remember: getting sick doesn't have to be a fact of life. For more information on helping to keep your family healthy, call 1-800-99-LYSOL.

Judy Robinson is Executive Director of the National Association of School Nurses.