

To be a topper, stay clean: Study

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Think twice before you give your child more canteen money for scoring good marks or letting him skip a morning shower to reach school on time. A study by the Indian Medical Academy has revealed that a child who has a bath every day and washes hands regularly is likely to score higher marks.

The child health intelligence and performance (CHIP) study has observed that kids who do not observe basic hygiene are more prone to infections that affect the child's brain development in the long run.

The online study involved 500 parents and 500 paediatricians across Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai and divided children into two categories—students who score more than 80% marks and have 80%



HYGIENE MATTERS: The study also found that children who do not follow basic hygiene fall sick more often and have poor attendance

attendance and children who score below 80% marks and have less than 80% attendance.

The study revealed that 88% of the students in the first category had a bath daily and 67% washed their hands often. "If a child bathes daily and keeps his hands clean, he will not contract too many infec-

tions. The child keeps diarrhoea, boils and fungal infections at bay so his attendance is likely to be high," says Dr Indira Jayakumar, a consultant paediatric intensivist at Apollo Children's Hospital.

The study also found that children who do not follow basic hygiene fall sick more often

and have poor attendance. Statistics reveal that only 47% of students who have attendance below 80% and score below 80% have a bath daily. Around 67% of the students in this category do not wash their hands regularly.

"You suffer body odour and are likely to contract a host of infections such as amoebiasis, worms, and diarrhoea if you do not wash your hands regularly and have clean nails," said Dr Rajagopal. Lower absorption of nutrients affects a child's cognitive development.

The study aimed to understand behavioural differences between the two categories of students and the relationship between infections, cognitive development and a child's performance in exams.

The study observed that children in the second category took leave mainly because of sickness.