

## KIDS' HEALTH

# Bad Company

NOT CRAZY ABOUT YOUR KID'S NEW BFF? SHOULD YOU INTERVENE OR KEEP MUM?

By Lauren Paige Kennedy



● Maybe your child's new BFF (best friend forever) is a bit of a bully. Or she's a "queen bee" who lives to cause drama. What do you do?

One mother of 11-year-old twins in California didn't mince words after her son came home crying each time he played with a certain boy, yet still begged for sleepovers with his tormentor. "I told my son this kid can be hurtful, that he's not a safe guy," she says. "If they play together at school, fine. But I avoid play dates. I won't invite him here."

Another mother from the Midwest chose a more covert approach when her 9-year-old daughter's "frenemy" regularly threatened to end the friendship when her every demand

*"If your child gravitates toward a kid with behavioral issues, don't criticize that child. Instead, suggest play dates with kids you like."*

wasn't met. Instead of criticizing the girl, Mom initiated a conversation with her daughter on the meaning of friendship—how it's based on mutual affection and trust.

Together, they discussed "how people who say those kinds of [mean] things are often afraid of losing someone, so they try to have power over other people. As much as I wanted to say, 'Spend less time with her,' I'm glad I didn't. I think my stand-back-and-advise approach helped my daughter ignore those manipulative threats."

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## BEAT THE SPREAD

By Hansa Bhargava, MD

Ebola seems to be in the news everywhere these days. I've heard from parents who wonder if an outbreak is possible in the United States. Public health officials say it is very unlikely because every year, they effectively help prevent the spread of potentially dangerous viruses like the flu.

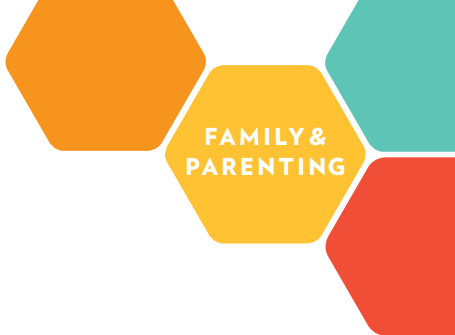
How does this translate to our homes, schools, and public places where infectious diseases can spread? As a mom of two 8-year-olds, I worry about infections spreading, too, especially those they may potentially be exposed to when they are at school: strep throat, pink eye, rotavirus (stomach infection), and the common cold.

Try these simple tips to help prevent any virus, deadly or not:

- 1. Wash hands frequently**—for at least 20 seconds (sing the "Happy Birthday" song a few times), especially before eating and after going to the bathroom.
- 2. Don't share foods** or use the same straw.
- 3. Don't touch your eyes** or mouth without first washing your hands.
- 4. Don't put things into your mouth**, such as pencils or pens.
- 5. Cough or sneeze** into your elbow or shoulder.

Get more ideas to keep your family happy and healthy at the **Raising Fit Kids Center**.





**BREO<sup>®</sup> ELLIPTA<sup>™</sup>**  
(fluticasone furoate 100 mcg and vilanterol 25 mcg inhalation powder)  
(serious side effects, cont'd)

BRIEF SUMMARY (cont'd)

- **thrush (fungal infection) in mouth and throat.** You may develop a yeast infection (*Candida albicans*) in your mouth or throat. Rinse your mouth with water without swallowing after using BREO ELLIPTA to help prevent thrush in your mouth and throat.
- **serious allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:
  - rash
  - swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue
  - hives
  - breathing problems
- **sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine**
- **effects on heart**
  - increased blood pressure
  - a fast and/or irregular heartbeat
  - chest pain
- **effects on nervous system**
  - tremor
  - nervousness
- **reduced adrenal function (adrenal insufficiency).** Adrenal insufficiency is a condition in which the adrenal glands do not make enough steroid hormones. This can happen when you stop taking oral corticosteroid medicines (such as prednisone) and start taking a medicine containing an inhaled corticosteroid (such as BREO ELLIPTA). When your body is under stress from fever, trauma (such as a car accident), infection, surgery, or worse COPD symptoms, adrenal insufficiency can get worse and may cause death. Symptoms of adrenal insufficiency include:
  - feeling tired (fatigue)
  - nausea and vomiting
  - lack of energy
  - low blood pressure
  - weakness
- **changes in laboratory blood values (sugar, potassium)**
- **weakened immune system and increased chance of getting infections (immunosuppression)**
- **bone thinning or weakness (osteoporosis)**
- **eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts.** You should have regular eye exams while using BREO ELLIPTA.

**Common side effects of BREO ELLIPTA include:**

- runny nose and sore throat
- upper respiratory tract infection
- headache
- thrush in the mouth and/or throat. Rinse your mouth without swallowing after use to help prevent this.

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the side effects with BREO ELLIPTA. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

**What are the ingredients in BREO ELLIPTA?**

Active ingredients: fluticasone furoate, vilanterol  
Inactive ingredients: lactose monohydrate (contains milk proteins), magnesium stearate

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for additional information about BREO ELLIPTA. You can also contact the company that makes BREO ELLIPTA (toll free) at 1-888-825-5249 or at [www.myBREO.com](http://www.myBREO.com).

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Frank Frankel, PhD, professor and founder of the UCLA Parenting & Children’s Friendship Program and author of *Friends Forever: How Parents Can Help Their Kids Make and Keep Good Friends*, thinks the latter choice is best. While he understands parents’ desires to intervene when a friendship seems toxic, he advocates staying on the sidelines—at least from your child’s point of view.

You want to give guidance, but “it can be treacherous *telling* a kid what to do,” Frankel says. Parents of tweens risk their child’s doubling down on the friendship if it’s forbidden. Also, once a “bad” kid is considered off-limits, there may be a big friendship void to fill.

That’s why Frankel suggests daily conversations with your child.

“Talk with your kids at the dinner table, asking them questions like who they ate lunch with,” Frankel advises. “If your child gravitates toward a kid with behavioral issues, I wouldn’t criticize that child. Don’t forbid the friendship. Instead, suggest play dates with kids you like, set up activities with children whose parents you trust, and encourage your child to join clubs where they’ll be exposed to new friendships. Once they start experiencing healthier friendships—which you’ll help facilitate—they’ll likely reject the less healthy ones on their own.”

**BUDDY SYSTEM**

ACCORDING TO SOCIAL SKILLS EXPERT FRANK FRANKEL, PHD, THE KEY TO PROTECTING KIDS FROM TOXIC FRIENDSHIPS IS TO KEEP THEM SO BUSY WITH POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THEY FORGET TO CARE ABOUT THE TROUBLE-MAKING PAL. SO, UNLESS THE BFF IN QUESTION ENGAGES IN BEHAVIOR THAT IS TRULY DANGEROUS, AVOID CRITICISM. INSTEAD:

**Stay tuned in.** “Know your children’s friends and activities,” says Frankel. “You do this by talking with your kids. Every day. Being involved allows you to better guide them.”

**Don’t ban bullies.** Better them! “Keep your kids busy with a wider circle of children who share similar interests. Once they start hanging out with kids who treat them well, chances are they’ll choose the ‘good’ kids, every time.”

**Tell your child that friendships build over time.** A new friendship “may take a while to click,” says Frankel. “I have my 7-year-old daughter offer a tour of her toys, allowing the new child to play with any toy she wants until they settle down into mutually enjoyable activities.”

Reviewed by **Hansa Bhargava, MD**, WebMD Medical Editor