

Comprehension 10

Read the passage carefully and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Under new hygiene regulations in Australia, children are to be banned from blowing out candles on birthday cakes.

The Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recently instructed daycare centers to provide birthday boys and girls with their own individual cupcakes to blow the candles out. This is to avoid the spread of germs.

"Children love to blow out their candles while their friends are singing 'Happy birthday,'" the NHMRC stated, "To prevent the spread of germs when the child blows out the candles, parents can provide a separate cupcake, with a candle if they wish, for the birthday child and enough cupcakes for all the other children."

Daycare staff should also be required to clean toys, doorknobs, floors and cushion covers with germ-killing disinfectant on a daily basis. Besides, youngsters must wash their hands with alcohol-based sanitizer before and after playing in sandpits.

The candle-blowing ban has received protest from some Australian doctors.

"If somebody sneezes on a cake, I probably don't want to eat it. However, if you're blowing out candles, how much organisms are transferred to a communal cake?" reasoned Steve Hambleton, president of Australian Medical Association.

He further commented, "It's normal and in fact healthy to be exposed to a certain amount of environmental organisms so as to build up our immune systems."

1. Why are children in Australia to be banned from blowing out birthday candles?

2. What alternative is provided by the NHMRC now that they intend to ban candle-blowing?

3. Name another measure that has been suggested for the prevention of germ-spreading?

4. What are the two reasons given by Steve Hambleton, who criticized the ban?

5. What does the underlined word in the text “communal” mean?

