

Wellness Works

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Add a healthy punch to your child's lunch

Today's myriad of tempting fast food options makes it difficult to compete with your child's appetite. But you can fill the lunchbox or bag with enticing and nutritious foods and beverages, and also set a good example at home with healthy eating habits. Introducing a diet high in whole grains, fruits and vegetables with fast food in moderation can help parents to model good behaviors that children will use for the rest of their lives.



Lunch does not have to be limited to cold sandwiches. The more creative and flexible the choices, the easier it is to incorporate food groups based on the USDA food pyramid. If your child has access to a microwave at school, leftovers from the night before are a good choice. A lunchbox with a thermos to keep foods warm and an ice pack to keep foods cold will also extend your options.

Children should also help make their own lunches once they are old enough. Kids who are involved in the preparation are far more likely to eat everything in their lunchboxes. When you offer creative, healthy options, your child can look forward to a lunch that's far from the plain brown bag it's packed in.

Source: PersonalMD.com

Be Smart. Be Well.

Learn about childhood obesity on www.besmartbewell.com, an online resource about health issues sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Illinois, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The childhood obesity page also features first-person videos and tips about changing children's eating habits and activity level.

This will give you a belt

Using seat belts properly can save more than 10,000 lives in America every year. Seat belts are your best protection in a crash and help the strongest areas of your body – the bones of your hips, shoulders and chest – absorb the force.

Make sure you adjust the lap belt or lap portion of the lap/shoulder belt so it is low and snug across the pelvic area, never across the stomach. The shoulder belt should cross the chest and collarbone and be snug. Never place it across the front of the face or behind your back.

Using a seat belt is easy, and the three seconds it takes to put one on could save your life. Whenever you're in a vehicle, get safety under your belt by buckling up.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



BlueCross BlueShield
of Texas



Put the brakes on childhood obesity

Be a positive role model

Watch your own lifestyle habits and how they may contribute to obesity in your child.

Get active

Walk or bike with the whole family.

Don't include eating with other activities

Don't eat while watching TV. Sit down to eat a meal, and then leave the table for other activities.

Try not to reward with food

Celebrate by playing a game or go to the park.

Limit television, video and computer time

Limit these activities to no more than one or two hours a day to avoid a sedentary lifestyle.

Set positive goals

Losing weight may be viewed as negative. Focus on a goal, such as being able to run for 20 minutes without getting tired.

Preventive steps may help your child have a healthier future.



These tips are intended as general information only. Please consult your doctor for specific medical advice.

Take your best shot at the flu

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a serious disease, and people of any age can get it. The flu causes an average of 36,000 deaths annually in the United States, mostly among those 65 or older, and more than 200,000 hospitalizations.

The "flu season" is usually from November through April each year, so it's best to get your vaccine in October or November.

This flu season could be worse due to the new flu virus novel H1N1 (previously called "swine flu"). An H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and should be available soon. Be sure to get both vaccines when you visit your health care provider.

Aiming for better health this year? Don't miss the shot so you can protect yourself against the flu.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Want to take disease off your hands?

You can when you practice regular hand washing, one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce the risk of spreading the germs that trigger common and serious illnesses.



Results of new studies show that many people aren't washing their hands in public places and that wherever they are, they wash their hands much less than they think.*

When you wash your hands, make sure you use soap and warm, running water and wash all parts of your hands and wrists thoroughly, including under your fingernails. Rub your hands together for at least 10 to 15 seconds, then pat them dry using a clean or disposable towel.

With this simple practice of good hygiene, everyone can join hands to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

*American Society for Microbiology

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in the United States. It is estimated that 40,170 women will die of breast cancer in 2009.

Treatment is more likely to work well when cancer is found early, which is why screening tests are so important. Ask your doctor about screening options, when to start and how often to check for breast cancer.

To find breast cancer early, the National Cancer Institute recommends that:

- Women in their 40s and older have mammograms every one to two years. A mammogram is a picture of the breast made with x-rays.
- Women who are younger than 40 and have risk factors for breast cancer should ask their health care provider whether to have mammograms and how often to have them.



Source: National Cancer Institute