



PREVENTIVE CARE FOR KIDS

by Rachel Savieo

As the school year begins and we start choosing new backpacks, lunch bags, pens, and pencils, it is important to make sure your kids are also up-to-date on all required vaccinations and sports physicals.

Ensuring your kids are healthy and have the best protection from viruses and contagious diseases starts them off on the right foot for the new school year.

In the U.S., most colds occur in the fall and winter months when more people spend time indoors. To reduce the risk to your kids, schedule an annual check-up to make sure they have the protection they need. Remember to schedule that annual dental check-up, too!

Of course, preventive care for kids goes beyond vaccines and physicals. To keep your kids in the best shape possible, make sure they wash their hands frequently, eat a balanced diet, are well-rested, and are physically active. Actions speak louder than words, so remember to model those behaviors yourself! Make sure you care for yourself the way you want your kids to care for themselves. They will notice!

Sources: US Department of Health and Human Services. hhs.gov/healthcare/prevention/children/ Accessed 7 July 2015.
American Academy of Pediatrics. healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx. Accessed 7 July 2015.
WebMD. webmd.com/cold-and-flu/cold-guide/understanding-common-cold-basics?page=2#3. Accessed 7 July 2015.

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SMART FACTS

22 Million

days of school are missed annually in the United States because of the common cold.

80%

of all infections are transmitted through the hands. Teach your kids the importance of washing their hands.

15 Seconds

Sing a song this long with your children as they wash their hands to help build good hygiene habits.



UNDERSTANDING F.M.L.A.

by Mechelle Meadows

Introduced 22 years ago, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) can still be a confusing part of a benefit plan. Many employees may feel uncomfortable asking for extended time away from work. Changes in workforce structures and expectations today—for instance, a higher percentage of employees with flexible hours and abilities to work virtually—may have diminished the need for some types of leave when compared to more rigid schedules 20 years ago. However, don't be afraid to ask for FMLA when your time and attention is demanded elsewhere due to a qualifying circumstance.

Here are some tips if you are considering using FMLA:

- Check your eligibility as well as any specific requirements from your employer.
 - » You must have worked for your current employer for at least 12 months prior to requesting leave, worked at least 1,250 hours in those 12 months (for employees who work 8 hours each day, this is approximately 157 days). If you work for a small employer, be sure they offer FMLA. Companies with fewer than 50 employees are not required to provide FMLA.
 - » Your employer may require that you use paid leave as part of your FMLA, such as a paid maternity leave or remaining balances of PTO.
 - » Your employer may require proof if using FMLA for a serious health condition. This is understandably a sensitive situation and employers are urged to ask for this information in a responsible manner.
- Give your employer as much notice as possible to give yourself more negotiating freedom on terms and dates of leave.
- When possible, be proactive to ensure your work gets covered during your leave. This could involve training other team members, connecting clients to an interim resource, or tabling projects that are not time-sensitive.
- Consider making a gradual return-to-work plan. Expecting to come back from a long leave and jump back into a 40+ hour work week might be over-ambitious. See if your company has options, such as coming back for only three days a week for the first month, or working 30 hours instead of 40, allowing time for adjustment.

When you use FMLA as a time of mental and emotional re-charge, in addition to physical healing, you will be positioned to return to work as a productive and happy employee—and for that, your employer will be grateful!

Sources: hbr.org/2014/07/how-to-prepare-for-maternity-leave&cm_sp=Article-_-Links-_-Top%20of%20Page%20Recirculation. Accessed 13 July 2015.
money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2013/04/04/6-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-family-and-medical-leave-act. Accessed 13 July 2015.

A FOUNDATION OF HEALTHY HABITS

by Kaitlin Enneking

As a parent, you pass more than your genes down to your children; you also pass down your health habits. Help your children lay a strong foundation for health by teaching them the following habits:

Drink water:

Soda and fruit juices are full of sugar that can lead to weight gain. Teach your kids that drinks like soda and juice are for special occasions only, just like dessert.

Eat breakfast:

Breakfast is the foundation for the day. It provides the fuel and energy kids need to learn and grow. Make a habit of eating breakfast alongside your children, because a routine of regular mealtimes in childhood will make it more likely your kids continue the habit when they are older.

Eat colorfully:

Kids are picky, but that doesn't mean they can't grow to like fruits and vegetables. Consistently provide them with fruits and vegetables of all colors and you will help them learn to be more adventurous eaters.

Sources: healthline.com/health-slideshow/healthy-habits-mothers-should-teach-kids#2. Accessed 21 July 2015.
heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Top-10-Tips-to-Help-Children-Develop-Healthy-Habits_UCM_303805_Article.jsp. Accessed 21 July 2015.

FINANCIAL CORNER WITH PETE THE PLANNER

The health of your children is likely your first priority. It should be. But their financial health and education is important too. I hate to break it to you, but your children's financial future depends on what you teach them now. And it's not just what you teach them, it's what they see and absorb from your behavior that really counts.

Yep, they internalize when you binge shop on payday. They notice when your debit card gets denied. They understand the frustration you feel when your car needs another repair you can't afford. You should still teach your kids specific lessons about money though. I highly recommend piggy banks and lemonade stands for younger kids, and using cellphone plans to teach older kids about money. But don't stop there. Prioritizing the health of your own financial life is the best financial education you could ever provide for your children. ♪

Get off the couch:

Healthy kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Make this activity a family event; show your kids that physical activity is important for everyone. Active kids make active adults.



NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH AUGUST

August is National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. This campaign strives to empower women to commit to breastfeeding by spreading information on its health benefits. Babies who are exclusively breastfed for six months are less likely to develop ear infections, diarrhea, and respiratory illnesses, and may be less likely to develop childhood obesity.

Source: usbreastfeeding.org/p/bl/et/blogid=61&blogaid=95 July 19, 2015.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: PEARS

by Laura Lubus, MPH

Pears are one of the most popular fruits in the world. They contain a solid dose of fiber and Vitamin C. They are also sodium, fat, and cholesterol free! When you visit the grocery store, you may notice that there are a couple different kinds of pears. However, there are actually 10 different species of pears. Bartlett pears are what most people think of when you say pear, and Anjou pears are the second most common pear in the U.S.

How to select

People like to enjoy pears at different levels of ripeness. The best way to tell if a pear has reached your desired ripeness is by gently using your thumb to push at the neck of the pear (where the stem is). The easier it is to press down on the pear, the riper it is. It is best to buy pears at the store that are firm because they ripen quickly.

How to store

If you do not plan on eating the pears immediately, you can place them in the refrigerator for a few days. However, if you would like for them to ripen quickly, you can place them in a brown paper bag on the counter.



How to prepare

Pears can be eaten after washing the skin under cool water and patting dry. It is best to eat the fruit with the skin because the fiber and vitamins are contained in the skin. If you want to cut the pear, you can use an apple corer for ease. Pears turn brown quickly, so apply lemon or lime juice if you're not eating them immediately.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: *Baked Oatmeal with Pears and Almonds*

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups oats
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 pear
- 1.5 cups skim milk (almond or soy can be substituted)
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon allspice

Directions

1. Mix dry ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Mix wet ingredients together in a separate bowl.
3. Mix dry and wet ingredients.
4. Place in an oven proof dish and bake at 375 degrees for up to 30 minutes, covered.

Makes 7-9, ½ cup servings

PER SERVING: 198 calories, 8.2g fat, 6.9g protein

Sources: usaappears.org/. Accessed 6 July 2015.

whfoods.com/genpage.php?name=foodspice&dbid=28#purchasequalities. Accessed 6 July 2015.