



# healthy kids **NOW**

## Free resources to help keep your child healthy

Independence Blue Cross (IBC) is committed to offering you the resources and support you need to keep your children healthy and safe. From reimbursements for bike helmets and weight management programs to a Health Coach available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer your health questions, IBC is here for you every step of the way. Below is a list of some of the resources available to our members with CHIP coverage. For more information, please call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** or **215-241-3367**.

### Have a health question?

Call a Connections<sup>SM</sup> Health Coach. Health Coaches are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer any health question or to provide support to CHIP members with diabetes, asthma, or a heart condition. Health Coaches can help you

manage your child's asthma symptoms or help you create a sick day plan if your child has diabetes. They're also available any time of the day or night, at no additional cost to you, to answer any health question. Just call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** to get connected with a Health Coach.

### Information at your fingertips

The Healthwise<sup>®</sup> Knowledgebase is an easy-to-use, comprehensive, online source of health information, available to CHIP members through our Connections<sup>SM</sup> Health Management Program at [www.thedialogcenter.com/ibc](http://www.thedialogcenter.com/ibc). To log on, all you'll need is the ID number from your child's Keystone Health Plan East ID card. Once logged on, you'll find information on a variety of topics, such as immunizations, asthma, diabetes, safety, and more.

### LOOK INSIDE!

- **High blood pressure: a children's problem, too ..... 2**
- **Putting your teen behind the wheel ..... 3**

### Healthy weight, healthy you!

According to the American Obesity Association, 30 percent of children between ages 6 and 11 are overweight, and more than 15 percent are obese. Children need special programs to address their specific health needs when it comes to weight loss. Independence Blue Cross offers up to \$200 back when children complete a hospital-based weight management program, Weight Watchers<sup>®</sup>, or H.I.P. Kids, developed by the YMCA for children 8 years old and up. Some weight management programs for children under 18 may also be eligible for reimbursement.

### Making healthy food choices

Do your children eat dinner in front of the TV? Does your family rarely eat dinner at home? Healthy food choices are just as important as exercise in maintaining a healthy weight and growing up strong. Now, CHIP members can attend six free nutrition counseling visits with their doctor or a registered dietitian\*. During these visits, you'll learn about healthy eating habits and food choices, maintaining a healthy weight, and more. To find



*continued on page 2*

## Free resources to help keep your child healthy

continued from page 1

a participating registered dietitian, visit [www.ibx.com](http://www.ibx.com), or contact Member Services at **1-800-464-5437**.

### Safety first!

To show our commitment to safety, we'll provide you with up to \$25 back when you purchase a bike helmet for your child with CHIP coverage. We also want to make sure that your child is prepared in case of an emergency. We'll provide up to \$25 when your child takes a safety course offered by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or American Safety & Health Institute. Call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** or **215-241-3367** for more information on receiving a reimbursement.

### Preventing disease through vaccination

Is your child up to date on his or her vaccines? It's important for children to stay current on vaccines all the way through high school in order to keep them in the best health. Independence Blue Cross mails reminders to the parents of young children and adolescents to provide the most current information available. If you have any questions about the immunizations your child should receive, visit the GenY Health Club at [www.ibx.com/gen-y2](http://www.ibx.com/gen-y2).

From birth to the teen years, Independence Blue Cross is there for you and your child, every step of the way. For more information on the Healthy Lifestyles<sup>SM</sup> programs available to your child, call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** or **215-241-3367**. And don't forget to call a Health Coach. They're available at no cost to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-800-ASK-BLUE**.

*\*Note: If nutrition counseling services are provided in addition to other covered services, an office visit copayment may apply for Low-Cost CHIP or Full-Cost CHIP members.*



## High blood pressure: a children's problem, too

High blood pressure is a growing problem for children as more become overweight. Doctors may not find the condition right away because it may have no symptoms.

Between 2 and 5 percent of children have high blood pressure. Nearly three-quarters of children with this problem don't know they have it. High blood pressure in children is sometimes caused by other diseases. It can be linked to being overweight, having a family history of high blood pressure, or being underweight at birth.

### Children's blood pressure changes as they grow

A child's normal blood pressure is based on age, gender, and height. That makes it trickier for doctors to track changes. Plus, medical guidelines recommend three abnormal readings before high blood pressure is diagnosed. Previous readings need to be readily available for comparison.

If left untreated, high blood pressure in children can damage the heart and arteries. This damage may eventually lead to many problems in adulthood,

such as stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, and vision changes.

### Checkups and lifestyle changes can help

The only way to know whether a child's blood pressure is high is to have it checked regularly. Health care experts recommend having your child's blood pressure checked yearly, beginning at age 3. Your doctor may recommend more frequent blood pressure readings if your child is overweight or if you have a family history of high blood pressure.

When a child has mild or moderate high blood pressure, lifestyle changes can help bring it under control. Take these steps to manage and prevent high blood pressure:

- Help your child maintain a normal weight.
- Serve a lot of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit the amount of salt your child eats, including such snacks as potato chips, corn chips, and pretzels.
- Encourage regular exercise. Have your child participate in sports at school or the local recreation center.

Source: Nemours Foundation; American Academy of Family Physicians

# Putting your teen behind the wheel

It is scary to watch your teenager drive off alone. No wonder you are frightened. Crashes kill more 16- to 20-year-olds than any other cause. And most kids who die in car accidents are driving.

## A danger behind the wheel

Teenagers are dangerous drivers mostly because they lack experience. With time and practice, they can develop the skills to be a safe driver.

As a parent, you play a big role in keeping your teen driver safe. For a start, you set the rules. You decide when your teen can drive, how many passengers to take, and what time to come home. Don't hesitate to punish your teen if he or she breaks your rules.

Keep teen drivers free of teen passengers and off the road at night. Extensive research indicates that a teen driver's chances of crashing increase with each additional teen passenger. Parents need to make sure they

know who is driving with their teen at all times. Research shows teen crash rates spike at night and that most nighttime crashes occur between 9 p.m. and midnight.

Encourage teens to get enough sleep. Teens need about nine hours of sleep every night, but many teens fall short due to a combination of early morning school start times and homework, sports, after-school jobs, and other activities. A lack of sleep can negatively affect vision, hand-eye coordination, reaction time, and judgment.

Another important thing you can do is be a role model. So, be sure to practice safe driving habits yourself.

## Keeping teen drivers safe

Here are some other ways to put your teenager on the road to safe driving:

- Instruct your child to follow driving laws, such as obeying the speed limit and using turn signals. Though drinking alcohol and taking drugs are illegal, your child should not make it worse by driving.
- Insist that your teen wear a seat belt at all times. Take away driving privileges if your child does not wear a seat belt.
- Teach your child that it is dangerous to drive while distracted. This includes drinking, eating, blasting music or using a headset, and talking or texting on a cell phone.
- Enroll your child in a driver education course. Completing the course may qualify your child for a discount on car insurance.

Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, American Automobile Association (AAA)



# Serving healthy meals is easier than you think

Your children may eat fast food, takeout meals, or convenience foods — even though you'd rather serve more healthy foods that cost less.

A reasonable goal is to make small changes during the month to improve the way your family eats. Here are just a few:

**Week 1:** Add one extra serving of fruit each day.

Example: Top your child's favorite cereal with sliced strawberries or bananas.

**Week 2:** Add one extra vegetable serving each day. Example: Add a shredded carrot to tuna salad.



**Week 3:** Add one healthy beverage each day. Example: Pack 100 percent fruit juice or 1 percent low fat milk instead of sodas in lunches.

**Week 4:** Include one healthy snack each day. Example: Offer a midmorning snack of dried fruit and nuts.

**Week 5:** Serve one extra high-fiber grain food each day. Example: Use 100 percent whole wheat bread instead of white bread for sandwiches.

Source: The Mom's Guide to Meal Makeovers: Improving the Way Your Family Eats, One Meal at a Time. Liz Weiss, M.S., R.D., and Janice Newell Bissex, M.S., R.D. Broadway Books, 2004.



## Recipe for health



## Mashed sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a great source of vitamins A and C, plus calcium and iron!

- 1½ pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and quartered
- ¾ cup low fat buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon green onion (green part only), minced
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish

Kosher salt, to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Place the potatoes in a pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a low boil. Reduce the heat. Cover and simmer until the potatoes are tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, about 15 to 20 minutes.

For the best texture, mash them with a potato masher. Add the buttermilk slowly, and mix into the potatoes. Stir in the onion and horseradish. Season with salt and pepper.

Serves 4.  
Each serving has 125 calories, 0.4 gm fat, 2% calories from fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 59 mg sodium, 27 gm carbohydrate.

Source: The Bonus Years Diet.  
Ralph Felder, M.D., Ph.D., and Carol Colman, G.P. Putnam & Son, 2007.



Independence Blue Cross & Highmark Blue Shield

Caring Foundation



1901 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1480  
1-800-464-5437  
Fax: 215-241-3679  
[www.caringfoundation.com](http://www.caringfoundation.com)

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## CHIP: Remember to renew

The Caring Foundation verifies children's eligibility for CHIP once each year. Your child's *Renewal* form will be mailed to your home every year 90 days prior to the anniversary of his or her enrollment. To avoid your child's coverage being cancelled, it is extremely important that you complete the *Renewal* form and return it to the Foundation as soon as possible.

You have two choices:

- Go to [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)

and submit your child's renewal information online.

- Complete the form you receive in the mail and return it to the Foundation.

In either case, you must sign the signature page and mail it back along with copies of your current income documentation.



## TRUE OR FALSE

Your child should get a flu shot.

This statement is true.

The flu is an acute respiratory infection caused by a variety of viruses. Typical symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and extreme fatigue. Vaccination (a shot) helps prevent the flu and its more severe, possibly

even life-threatening, complications for all age groups. It is especially important for children ages 6 months to 18 years and people at high risk for serious complications to receive the flu shot this fall.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention