



# healthy kids **NOW**

## PCP or ER: Where Should You Go?

Keystone Health Plan East and the Caring Foundation want your child to get the right kind of medical care at the right time and in the right place. With the help of the doctors in our network, we have set standards for different kinds of care — routine, urgent, and emergency.

The emergency room is not the right place to take your child for routine services or for care that could be given in the primary care physician's (PCP's) office. In the emergency room, the most serious cases are treated first. If your child's case is not that serious, he or she may wait a long time. You should use an emergency room only for true emergencies. If you are not sure if your child's condition is an emergency, call his or her PCP. The PCP is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The PCP should

be familiar with your child's medical history and is the best one to assess the condition. Based on your child's symptoms, the PCP may either send you to a hospital emergency department or arrange to see the child for an evaluation and treatment in the office, or perhaps suggest another option.

**Routine** care means regular checkups, physicals, and immunizations. For these, you need to contact your child's PCP. You should be able to schedule an appointment for most routine visits within two weeks. It can take up to four weeks for physicals. Be sure to schedule regular appointments for your child to see his or her PCP.

**Urgent** care is for a health condition that does not need to be treated right away, but should be treated within 24 hours. You

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should contact your child's PCP to schedule an appointment. Many urgent conditions need follow-up care that is best provided or coordinated by the physician who knows your child best — his or her PCP.

**Emergency** care is for medical conditions that could endanger your child's health if not treated right away. They could be either physical or mental problems. If your child is having symptoms that you think reflect an emergency condition, you should rush him or her to the emergency department of the closest hospital. If the child is a pregnant teenager, her own health concerns may affect her unborn child as well.

If you think your child's situation is life-threatening, you should call 911. Emergency conditions are handled differently. They allow your child direct access to medical care, and they do not require prior approval. Emergency care covers unusual services such as ambulance rides. If your child does get emergency health care, be sure to notify your child's PCP soon afterward, even if no follow-up treatment is needed.



Remember, a Health Coach can answer any of your health-related questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** to speak to a Health Coach from the Connections Health Management Program today.

*For more information on how to best get care for your child, refer to your CHIP Benefits Handbook.*

## Helping Kids Cope

When violence takes over the front page, parents worry — and children notice.

You can help your child in hard times by offering love and safety. Talking with children is the most important thing parents can do.

Think about your kids' ages before you let them watch a lot of today's television news. A 3-year-old thinks danger is close to home, while an 18-year-old may have a more realistic view. Just try to assure your children they're safe.

Children may not say or even know how they're feeling, so watch for clues. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that after scary events, whether personal or in the news, children often:

- depend more on parents or guardians;
- have nightmares;
- act like a younger child (thumb sucking or bed wetting);



- fear things that remind them of the event;
- act out the event at play.

Encourage younger kids to draw and older kids to keep a journal. Children often show powerful emotions through such drawing or creative writing.

Keeping an eye on your child can alert you to changes and help you

explore those changes with your child.

If you're worried about your child, seek professional help. A parent's role is to try to figure out if and when the child is having a problem, and to tell your doctor if necessary.

*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics*

## Keeping Kids Active When School Is Out

The summer. Time for camp, catching bugs, water parks...and weight gain? Recent studies show that for



students, summer months may be worse than the school year when it comes to gaining weight.

### Charting weight changes

About 5,400 children from 310 schools were tracked during kindergarten, first grade, and the summer in between. Their body mass index — a measure of their weight and height, as compared with other kids their ages — increased faster and at a more uneven rate in the summer. This is because children may eat more on summer vacation. Also, gym class during the school year may help kids burn extra calories.

### Warm-weather workouts

Just like adults, kids need to burn as many calories as they eat to avoid gaining weight. That means healthy

eating and an hour of physical activity on most days of the week.

Luckily, summer's sunshine offers the chance to get out and get moving. Try these tips to keep your children from gaining weight during the summer:

- Limit screen time — including TV and video games — to two hours a day or less.
- Encourage your little ones to get outside and play. Hopscotch, swimming, tag, and hide-and-go-seek all count as exercise.
- Sign your child up for a summer sports league. He or she might enjoy soccer or softball.
- Walk instead of driving to visit friends or run errands in the neighborhood.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## How to Keep Mosquitoes and Other Pests Away

The following steps can protect you and your family against insect bites:

- Stay clear of areas that attract pests. Bees and wasps like garbage, so keep your trash outside in covered cans. Avoid areas with standing water, like ponds or fountains, which attract mosquitoes that can carry the West Nile virus.
- Consume sweet-smelling foods and drinks indoors, and avoid sweet colognes, soaps, and lotions.
- Avoid floral prints, bright clothing, and shiny jewelry, which can attract insects.
- Use a mosquito repellent, except for on your child's face, hands, or irritated skin. Do not use mosquito repellent on an infant. Instead, place your baby in a carriage, and cover the carriage with mosquito netting.
- Light candles at night. People who lit citronella candles had 42 percent fewer bites than those who stayed in the dark. Regular candles reduced bites by 23 percent.
- Design your garden to be less attractive to bees, avoiding yellow and white flowers.
- If a wasp or bee threatens, move away slowly and quietly. Avoid waving your arms, swatting, or running.

Source: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology



## Renewing CHIP Coverage



The Caring Foundation verifies your child's eligibility for CHIP once each year. You will receive a "renewal" form at least three months before your child's insurance is due for renewal. To avoid the cancellation of your child's coverage, it is extremely important to provide the necessary information before the date listed on the form.

You have two options:

- Go to [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us) and complete the form online.
- Fill out the paper renewal form.

In either case, you must sign the Signature Page (page 3) of the renewal form and attach documentation of your current income. Then, you must either mail or fax (215-241-3679) this information to the Caring Foundation.

## CHIP Benefits Update

Attached nearby is the latest update to your child's CHIP benefits. Please review this information and keep the document with your child's CHIP Benefits Handbook (3/05). If you have questions about this update, call Member Services at 1-800-464-5437, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Protecting Your Child from Sun Damage

Some sunshine is good for children. Sun exposure is an important source of vitamin D, which helps strengthen bones. However, too much sun is harmful to your child.

Ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause sunburn today, and wrinkles, age spots, and skin cancer years later. Children are more at risk for sunburn than adults because they spend more time in the sun.

Although skin cancer in children is rare, the most common form of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma, has been found in children. And the most deadly form of skin cancer, melanoma, can develop later in life from just one severe childhood sunburn.

Sun protection should begin when your children are infants. Be sure your children are protected even on cloudy days.

**Clothing:** Dress your children in light-colored clothing and a hat with a brim. Experts recommend long sleeves and long pants.

**Sunglasses:** Childhood sun exposure can damage the eyes. Children and babies should always wear sunglasses. Buy sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV rays.

**Sunscreen:** You should apply sunscreen that is at least SPF 15 on your children 30 minutes before they go outside. Choose a waterproof sunscreen, and reapply every two hours. It's best to keep babies younger than 6 months out of the sun completely or shade their carriage or stroller with an umbrella. If you need to use sunscreen on a baby, apply a small amount to the face and the back of the hands. Apply carefully around the eyes, avoiding the eyelids.

Parents should have their children stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., when it is the strongest.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



# Recipe for Health: Fresh Salsa

Fresh herbs add flavor, so you can use less salt.

- 6 Roma tomatoes, or 3 large tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 2 serrano or jalapeño peppers, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1/8 teaspoon oregano, finely crushed
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 black-skinned avocado, diced
- Juice of 1 lime



1. Combine all ingredients in a glass bowl.
2. Serve immediately, or refrigerate and serve within 4 or 5 hours.



Yield: 8 servings  
Serving size:  
1/2 cup

Each serving provides:  
Calories: 42  
Total fat: 2 g  
Saturated fat: less than 1 g  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Sodium: 44 mg  
Calcium: 12 mg  
Iron: 1 mg

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute/National Institutes of Health



Independence Blue Cross & Highmark Blue Shield

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employees. In order to administer your health benefits effectively, IBC may collect and share PHI about you in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Examples of how this information might be used include payment for covered services and for health care operations in general. Detailed information can be found online at [www.ibx.com](http://www.ibx.com), or you can contact Member Services at 1-800-464-5437 to obtain a written copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices.

### TRUE OR FALSE

**You should go to the emergency room right away if your child feels sick.**

**This statement is false.**

If your child has the flu, a cold, or a stomachache, you should call his or her doctor first. But if your child has a serious or life-threatening problem, such as those listed below, you should go to the emergency room right away:

- trouble breathing
- chest pain

- dizziness
- confusion
- very bad pain
- very bad bleeding
- trouble speaking
- coughing or throwing up blood

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians