



Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program  
**We Cover All Kids.**  
 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
 Edward G. Rendell, Governor



Independence Blue Cross & Highmark Blue Shield

*Caring Foundation*



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# healthy kids **NOW**



**Keep children safe this summer**

Many of summertime's pleasures carry health risks for children. You can help them avoid these hazards by taking simple precautions.

### Bad bugs

- Serious reactions to bee and wasp stings, indicated by hives, dizziness, or shortness of breath, require immediate medical attention. Call **911**. If a bite looks infected, call your PCP.
- Mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus, which can be fatal. To stay safe:
  - Consider keeping children indoors at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
  - Apply an insect repellent that contains no more than 30 percent DEET.
  - Use mosquito netting over infant carriers.
  - Get rid of containers with standing water; they provide breeding places for mosquitoes.
- Ticks can cause Lyme disease and other infections. To protect your kids:
  - Have them wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when

walking in the woods or tall grass.

- Check their hair and skin for ticks after they spend time outdoors.
- Remove ticks immediately with tweezers. Grasp the tick close to the child's skin. Pull straight back to avoid crushing the tick's body.

### Bikes and boards

- When biking, make sure they wear approved helmets that fit properly. Helmets reduce the risk for brain injury by up to 88 percent. When skateboarding, make sure they wear helmets, as well as wrist, knee, and elbow guards.
- Make sure their bicycles are the proper size, and adjust the seats to the right height.
- Be sure they know and follow the rules of the road.

CHIP members can receive up to \$25 back for the purchase of a bike helmet. Call **1-800-ASK-BLUE** for information on how to receive this reimbursement.

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### Flip-flops

- Flip-flops and similar footwear lack arch support and shock absorption, and they do not protect feet. Your children should not wear them for long periods of time, for sports or yard work, or for walking long distances.
- Flip-flops are appropriate when walking around a public pool, beach, or locker room. Walking barefoot can expose feet to injury, plantar warts, and athlete's foot.

### Garden chemical exposure

- Follow product label directions and warnings when using pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides. Clear the area of children, toys, and pets before using the products. Don't apply chemicals on windy days.
- Seek immediate medical care if children come in contact with yard chemicals. Call the Poison Control line at **1-800-222-1222**.

### Heat hazards

- Have children avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

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## Keep children safe this summer

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- Be sure they drink plenty of water, especially before, during, and after doing strenuous activities. They should avoid caffeinated sodas, which can cause dehydration.

### Sunburn

- Limit children's time in the sun, particularly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are at their peak.
- Apply sunscreen on children 30 minutes before going outdoors, even on cloudy days. Use one with an SPF of at least 15 that protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Have children wear sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats.

### Water safety

- Teach children to swim, or enroll any child age 4 or older in swimming lessons.
- Install a fence with a locking gate if you have a home pool.
- Watch children at all times when they are in or near bodies of water.
- Let them dive only in areas designated for diving, where the depth of the water is known and only if they have been taught how to dive.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Sports Medicine, American Podiatric Medical Association



## Help kids sideline stress

Overscheduling. Rushed families. High parental expectations. Goad-ing from peers. Getting into the “best” college. Whew! Today's kids face enormous stress.

In addition, kids must cope with all the issues that stress out adults, such as violence, war, and economic hardship. While you can't entirely remove stress from your children's lives, you can help ease it:

- **Model good behavior.** Show your children how you care for yourself by eating right, exercising, sleeping well, and dealing with your own emotions. What you say has value, but what you *do* is much more meaningful.
- **Make sure younger children have time to play.** It lets them think, dream, and relax.
- **Help kids build coping skills at an early age.** Teach children to avoid some problems, let others go, or break tasks into small parts they can do more easily.
- **Redefine success.** Let children know you want them to do their best and become kind, generous, creative, productive, and innovative adults. For example, let your children know it's more important for them to get into a college where they can thrive than a top-ranked university. Kids with good coping skills are more likely to become strong, independent adults who live balanced, fulfilling lives.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

## Independence Blue Cross notice of privacy practices

At Independence Blue Cross (IBC), the protection of your privacy is very important to us. This is why we have policies and procedures regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of member data known as protected health information (PHI). These policies include: the company's routine uses and disclosures of PHI; use of authorizations; access to PHI; internal protection of oral, written, and electronic PHI; and protection of information disclosed by the company to employees.

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## Tame the sugar beast: healthy, sweet snacks for kids



Your teenaged eating machine reaches for the cookie jar every day after school. Your child munches on candy bars while watching TV. You know that extra sugar means extra calories, extra weight, and tooth decay. How can you satisfy your kids' sweet tooth without derailing their healthy diet?

To get your kids on the right track, reduce their desire for sugar while offering healthy alternatives. You might also find a fix for your own sweet cravings along the way. Here's how:

### Out of sight, out of mind.

Arrange your kitchen to encourage healthy snacking. Put cookies and other goodies on high shelves. Better yet: Don't bring them into the house at all. Set fruit and other nutritious options on countertops and low refrigerator shelves, within easy reach.

**Add fruit.** Nature's candy offers plenty of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Sweet choices kids may love: raisins, fruit canned in juice (not heavy syrup), frozen bananas, or fruit kebabs made with apple, banana, melon, or pineapple. Change them up to keep kids interested.

**Spice it up.** Allspice, cardamom, and nutmeg add sweetness without sugar. Try adding them to oatmeal, rice, or sliced fruit. Even veggies like carrots and sweet potatoes can seem sugary if cooked with ginger or cinnamon.

## QUICK TIP

Fight food marketing. Sugary cereals and other products are advertised right to your kids. Talk with them about the importance of healthy eating to counter the messages.

**Be careful with juice.** Serve 100 percent fruit juice — or choose low-fat milk instead. Fruit drinks, fruit cocktails, or fruit-ades may contain added sugar and calories.

**Look for sugary code words.** Read food labels closely. You might not see sugar on the ingredient list. Sometimes it appears as dextrose, corn syrup, sucrose, corn sweetener, or malt syrup. Choose foods that don't have a sugar listed as one of the first few ingredients.

**Start a healthy food relationship.** Don't promise dessert as a reward. This teaches kids that broccoli is less valuable than ice cream sundaes. At the same time, forbidding treats makes them more desirable. Set a healthy example of moderate portions instead.

*Sources: American Dietetic Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

## Kick the cola habit to protect your family's kidneys

You may think bubbly, ice-cold cola is a drink you and your kids can share. Read this before you take your next sip: Studies show that cola may increase your risk for chronic kidney disease.

### What is kidney disease?

Kidneys remove toxins and extra water from your blood. With kidney disease, the filters inside these bean-shaped organs don't work properly. Harmful toxins then build up in your blood.

Kidney failure is about 20 times more common in adults than children. But birth defects, inherited conditions, and injuries can affect kids' kidney function.



### The cola connection

In a recent study, people who drank two or more colas per day — diet or regular — were more than twice as likely to have kidney disease than those who didn't. Why? Soft drinks have been linked to diabetes and high blood pressure, which — along with family history — are risk factors for kidney disease.

Plus, cola contains the mineral phosphorus. Too much phosphorus causes another important mineral — calcium — to leak from bones. Extra calcium can harden into stones in your kidneys, causing pain and boosting your odds for kidney disease.

### Kidney health tips

- Serve your family lots of water to flush harmful substances from the kidneys.
- If you or your loved ones must drink cola, limit it to 12 ounces a day. This also helps control weight and protect bones.

*Sources: National Kidney Foundation, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*

# 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 Caring Foundation as soon as possible.

You have two choices:

- Go to **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 Caring Foundation.

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



Independence Blue Cross & Highmark Blue Shield

Caring Foundation



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## TRUE OR FALSE



**Vaccines cause autism.**  
**This statement is false.**

Study after study has failed to link autism and vaccines, says the American Academy of Pediatrics. The myth that vaccines cause autism stems from a 1998 study of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. This study was later found to have flaws, and most of its authors now agree it was wrong. Autism is often found when a child is 18 to 30 months old. Since children get the MMR vaccine just before that age, the myth about this link persists.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

**Vaccines have not wiped out common childhood illnesses.**

**This statement is true.**

Vaccines can have dramatic effects. After U.S. doctors began using the chickenpox vaccine in 1995, chickenpox cases fell 90 percent in 10 years. But chickenpox, measles, whooping cough, and other deadly diseases are not gone. They're just a plane ride away, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Travelers "import" them from overseas. When that happens, communities with lots of unvaccinated children face a higher risk of outbreaks.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention