



healthy kids **NOW**

Healthy weight, healthy kids

Although weight-gain issues are a common concern for adults, they're a growing problem for children as well. As a parent, you may wonder how to motivate your child to eat well and exercise to maintain a healthy weight.

Encourage kids to make smart choices

To help your child keep up with good eating and exercise habits, follow these steps:

- Limit drinks sweetened with sugar, and encourage children to drink water.
- Replace junk food with nutritious snacks such as fruits and veggies.
- Encourage your child to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Have your child eat breakfast every day.
- Limit eating at restaurants, especially fast-food places.
- Eat together as a family.
- Limit portion sizes so that kids eat less.
- Have your child take part in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise daily.

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- Limit time spent watching television and using the computer to one or two hours a day for children ages 5 and older.
- Remove TVs and computers from your child's sleeping area.

Reaching a healthy weight

For children whose weight is above the healthy range, the steps for reaching a healthy weight are similar to those for maintaining it. The goal is to slow the rate of weight gain or maintain your child's current weight as he or she gets older and taller. This way, your child grows into the weight.

If you think your child needs to lose weight, talk with your doctor. He or she may suggest an eating plan to make sure that your child gets balanced nutrition with fewer calories. Parents can help too, by setting a good example for their kids.

Sources:
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
 American Medical Association,
 American Heart Association



When to take your child to the ER

The emergency room (ER) should be used for true emergencies only. An emergency is an illness or injury that could threaten your child's life if action is not taken immediately. Here are some examples of emergencies:

- choking on food, candy, or an object;
- fainting;
- eating or drinking something poisonous;
- heavy bleeding that can't be stopped;
- injuries from a car or bike crash;
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;
- persistent vomiting;
- severe burns;
- loss of consciousness;
- seizures;
- sudden, severe pain anywhere in the body.

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When to take your child to the ER

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Sometimes, an injury or health problem is not an emergency. Your child's doctor can handle many of these nonemergencies, or minor health problems, including:

- stomachaches
- sprains
- fever lower than 100 degrees
- rashes
- earaches
- diarrhea or constipation
- nosebleeds
- small cuts
- minor bruises

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Institute for Preventive Medicine, Journal of Emergency Medicine, American College of Emergency Physicians

Opening up lines of communication with your teen

Sure, the "KEEP OUT!" sign on your teenager's door isn't very subtle. While every adolescent needs space, in reality your teen probably doesn't want to shut the door on communication with you. He or she wants to know what you think, according to experts.

Here are a few ways to thaw an adolescent's cold shoulder:

- If your teen seems grumpy, find out what's bugging him or her. Something simple may work, such as, "I can see you're upset. What's on your mind?"
- If your teen doesn't want to talk, try bringing up the topic again in a few days. Let him or her know



you're not trying to be critical or nosy. You just want to understand.

- Accept that arguments are common during the teen years. If things get heated, take a break and revisit the issue after you both have cooled off.

Sources: Journal of Pediatric Nursing, Journal of Pediatric Health Care, American Association of Family Physicians, Pediatrics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Dial 'A' for addiction?

If your teens' and tweens' ears aren't glued to cell phones, their thumbs probably are. But research suggests too much cell phone use could signal a surprising problem: addiction.

A Hong Kong study found that the symptoms of young cell phone addicts resemble those of problem gamblers. Among the issues: inability to control cravings for the cell phone, feeling anxious and lost without it, using it to escape loneliness and isolation, and decreased productivity tied to its use.

Most U.S. teens and nearly half of 8- to 12-year-olds have cell phones. Outgoing youngsters are more apt to become addicted to them because they like to socialize and have more friends to communicate with.

Bored by leisure time that lasts too long, doesn't excite them, or doesn't vary enough, youth are more likely to turn to cell phones to break the monotony.

When use turns to abuse, some kids can't control their cravings. They find it hard to hide from family and friends the extreme amount of time they spend on the phone. They feel lost, restless, moody, depressed, or irritable.

Sources: CyberPsychology & Behavior, Journal of Children and Media, Environmental Health Perspectives

The more kids talk and tap out messages, the less productive they are in other areas of life and the less attention they pay to issues they should face up to. They may lose interest in social, occupational, and recreational activities as they rack up cell phone bills.

Here's some advice to help children (or anyone else) develop a healthy perspective and balance about cell phone use:

- Address the cell phone's adverse effects without losing sight of its advantages.
- Teach them to take time making decisions so they can consider the potential risks of their behavior.
- Help them develop coping skills to control their impulsive use of cell phones.



Dental visits help kids do their best

Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease affecting U.S. children, says the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children lose more than 51 million hours of school a year due to dental-related problems such as pain, swelling, infection, or trauma, the American Dental Association (ADA) Foundation adds. Children with toothaches have trouble concentrating and may not want to join in classroom discussions.

Just because your child's teeth look OK doesn't mean that they

are OK. Checkups when your child is symptom-free can prevent some problems and catch others while they're easily treatable.

During a routine exam, the dentist will:

- Assess the amount and location of decay (if any) in your child's mouth
- Determine if the gums and soft tissues of the mouth are healthy
- Look at the "architecture" of the mouth and check your child's bite



Take care of young teeth

Fluoridation and dental sealants have helped reduce tooth decay. However, the most powerful weapons are good oral hygiene and a healthy diet.

- Have children brush their teeth at least twice a day (although after each meal and before bedtime is ideal). They should brush for a minimum of two minutes each time. They should also floss each day. If they are too young to floss

by themselves, you may need to help.

- Give your kids healthy snack foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, and cheese. Limit sugary snacks and other high-carbohydrate foods (including soda). The bacteria that cause tooth decay thrive on simple sugars, especially those in sticky foods and treats.

- Discourage frequent snacking. Periods without eating allow saliva to wash away acid that could erode tooth enamel.
- Keep them drinking water. Water helps wash away sugars and acids in the mouth.
- Encourage kids to chew sugar-free or xylitol-sweetened gum.

Sources: Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry



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 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 three choices:

- Go to www.compass.state.pa.us, and submit your child's renewal information online.
- Call **1-800-986-5437**, and renew by phone.
- Complete the form you receive in the mail, and return it to the Caring Foundation.

In all cases, 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



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
IBC & HBS
Caring Foundation
for Children

IBC & HBS Caring Foundation for Children
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You have the right to appeal

If you do not agree with a decision regarding your child's CHIP coverage, you can file an appeal of that decision. There are two categories of appeals:

- appeals about your child's eligibility for CHIP;
- appeals about your child's CHIP benefits for medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, or prescription drug services.

There are separate processes for each category as described below.

CHIP eligibility appeals

Please call Customer Service at **1-800-464-5437** and allow our staff the opportunity to answer your questions or resolve your issue so that you do not have to file an appeal. If you still do not agree with our decision after talking with Customer Service, you can request an impartial eligibility review by contacting the Pennsylvania Insurance Department. Examples

of decisions you can appeal are: your child's CHIP coverage is terminated (except for nonpayment of premium) or the coverage changes from Free CHIP to Low-Cost CHIP or Full-Cost CHIP. Your request for review must be sent in writing to:

*Pennsylvania Insurance Department
CHIP Eligibility Review Unit
1142 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Fax: 717-705-1643*

CHIP benefits/coverage appeals

Appeals about covered services requested from your child's CHIP benefits should be directed to Keystone Health Plan East. These appeals are called:

- "Complaints" when you question limits or exclusions from the CHIP Benefits Handbook, a provider's services or network status, or certain other issues;
- "Grievances" when you disagree with a request denied as experimental, cosmetic, or not

medically necessary, or for other reasons that mainly raise medical or clinical issues.

These appeals must be sent to:

*Keystone Health Plan East
Member Appeals Department
P.O. Box 41820
Philadelphia, PA 19101-1820
Phone: 1-888-671-5276
Fax: 1-888-671-5274*

For additional information regarding the specific appeal processes, please refer to your child's CHIP Benefits Handbook (3/05) and all subsequent CHIP Benefits Updates.

If you have any questions about your appeal rights, need to know the correct location to send your appeal, or need assistance in filing an appeal, you may call Customer Service at **1-800-464-5437**, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.