

# healthy kids now

SPRING 2020

## Ease Your Child's **Spring Allergies**

**D**oes your child start sneezing or coughing at the first signs of spring? Spring allergies may be the problem. Most spring allergies are caused by tree pollen and can begin as early as February and last until the start of summer. Allergies that continue through late spring into the summer may be caused by grass or weed pollen. It's common for people to be allergic to more than one substance.

Here's what you can do to help your child fight spring allergies and feel better.

**Spot the signs.** Symptoms of allergies can vary from person to person. They can include coughing, sneezing, a runny nose, itchy or watery eyes, or a sore throat.

**Schedule an appointment.** Talk with your child's doctor to help you find out what's causing the allergies and learn how to control symptoms.

**Start treatment early.** If you already know your child has spring allergies, begin your child's medicine two weeks before his or her symptoms typically begin.

**Beware of dry, hot, windy days.**

This type of weather makes pollen counts higher. Try to also keep pollen out of your home and car. Keep windows and doors closed, and turn on the air conditioner, if possible.

**Keep allergens off your child.**

Have your child change clothes and wash his or her hair after spending time outside.

*Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians;  
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*



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# Turn Your Teen's Phone into a Health Coach

**M**ost young people have a smartphone by the time they are in high school. Sometimes it is hard to tell where your teen's arm ends and where his or her phone starts. But, it isn't just for group texts and social media posts. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says most adolescents have used mobile apps for their health, too. In fact, phones can help teens:

## Stop Smoking with the quitSTART App

A team of experts and ex-smokers built this app, which is approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other government agencies. With it, smokers can build a personal plan to kick their smoking habit.

Users mark times and places where they want to smoke. Then, they receive a ping of encouragement to avoid smoking. They can pull up a game or challenge to distract themselves from cravings. They can even earn success badges to share on social media.

## Eat Better with the BAM! Dining Decisions App Game

This good nutrition game is an app from a food expert and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Players learn how healthy foods are by sorting them into three categories:

- 1. Go** (healthy options, like fruits and veggies)
- 2. Slow** (less nutritious choices, like waffles or hot dogs)
- 3. Whoa** (once-in-a-while treats, like doughnuts and ice cream)

## Ease Stress with the Calm App

Your anxious teen can learn the basics of meditation with "7 Days of Calm" from this app. From there, they can choose from a range of mindfulness exercises to help them focus on what's happening now.

One of the mindfulness exercises focuses on the body. Another exercise helps your child focus on breathing. Other exercises help your child with

## GET CONNECTED

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Staying on top of your child's health is easy when you sign up to receive email and text messages\* from Independence Blue Cross.

Through our secure text and email messages, you'll receive:

- Valuable health and wellness information
- Screening reminders for your child
- Important plan notifications/updates
- Savings alerts

Sign up today! Visit [www.ibx.com/CHIPconnect](http://www.ibx.com/CHIPconnect).

Questions? Call **1-800-464-5437** (TTY/TDD: 711).

\*Standard message and data rates may apply.

sleep, concentration, and more.

A study found that eight weeks of using the app reduced stress in college students.

## Move More with MapMyFitness

No matter your teen's workout of choice — cycling, hiking, or running — he or she will find motivation to stick with it here. Users can set goals, track their time and mileage, and access training plans or preset routes. App users who are more competitive can go head-to-head in challenges.

## Zap Bad Feelings with MoodMission

This app helps users cope with days when they feel down or depressed. First, users rate their mood. If it's low, the app provides personal, custom tasks to boost the user's mood.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; JMIR Mhealth and Uhealth; British Journal of Sports Medicine



## Handprint Flower

### MATERIALS

- Green and other colored papers
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue or tape

### DIRECTIONS

1. Draw a flower stem on a piece of green paper. You can add leaves if you want.
2. Place your hand on a piece of colored paper and trace around it. Do this four or five times. Use any color paper you like. These will be your flower petals!
3. Draw a small circle on a piece of colored paper. This will be the center of your flower.
4. Use scissors to cut out all your drawings.
5. Glue or tape your handprint cutouts in a circle pattern at the top of the flower stem so they look like petals. Then, glue or tape the circle to the center of your petals.

## Teen Social Media Use Linked to Mental Health Risks

**T**eens have a love-hate relationship with social media. Most say it helps them feel more connected to friends, but almost half say they feel overwhelmed by online drama. For parents and caregivers trying to protect their children, it can get confusing as well.

### Studying Online Behavior

Researchers compared teens who didn't use social media with those who spent a lot of time online. The results? Teens who spent more than three hours per day on social media were more likely to report feeling a high level of anxiety and depression. Some had a mix of behaviors, including:

- Acting out
- Hostility
- Aggression

### Safe Social Media Use

The growth of social media may also play a role in the rising rates of major depression and suicidal behavior in teens. It's important to help your child learn how to use social media wisely. Here are a few tips:

- Set daily limits on social media use. Less time online is better for teens' well-being.
- Educate yourself about social media use. Here are two helpful sites: [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org) and [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org).
- Talk with your teen about staying safe online. This includes not sharing private information.
- Discuss ways to avoid or deal with bullies on social media and treat others with respect.
- Turn off smartphones and other devices an hour before bedtime.





# Antibiotics Probably Won't Help a Respiratory Illness

**Y**our child has a headache, a burning throat, and a runny nose. You might think asking your child's doctor for antibiotics will speed along his or her recovery. But, experts warn against it.

Antibiotics do not work on viruses, which cause most respiratory infections. Plus, using them too much can lead to bacterial resistance (supergerms that are harder to fight).

Doctors should never prescribe antibiotics for the common cold or flu. And, your child probably does not need them for most other respiratory conditions, either.

Exceptions include:

- **Bronchitis:** If your child's doctor also thinks your child has pneumonia.
- **Sore throat:** When your child tests positive for strep throat.
- **Sinus infection:** For symptoms that are severe, linger for more than 10 days, or get worse after first getting better. These signs mean bacteria are probably involved.

## Save Money, Avoid Side Effects

Preventing supergerms is the biggest reason to steer clear of unnecessary antibiotics. But, there are also more immediate perks.

Like any medications, antibiotics have risks. Side effects range from mild — upset stomach or rash — to severe and life-threatening. The benefits might outweigh the risks if your child has a bacterial infection. But if antibiotics won't actually help your child, there's no reason to put him or her at risk.

## Soothing Symptoms

No antibiotics doesn't mean your child needs to be uncomfortable. Help ease symptoms by making sure he or she:

- Rests
- Drinks a lot of fluids
- Takes any other medications the doctor suggests

*Sources: Annals of Internal Medicine; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Food and Drug Administration; American Heart Association*

## Stick to the Script

Only give your child medications the doctor says he or she needs. Your child's doctor picks treatments that will help him or her get better. But for medicine to work, your child must take it as prescribed. That means making sure he or she:

- Follows all the prescription directions: how much to take, how often, and when
- Takes all the doses, even when feeling better

If you use only part of the medicine, it can mean you treated only part of the infection.

*Sources: See above sources.*



# Get Kids Moving Outside This Spring

**K**eeping children and teens active can seem like an uphill battle. Between TV, the latest video games, and social media, it's easy for them to go for days without exercise.

But, children need exercise to build strength and bone mass, stay at a healthy weight, reduce stress, and feel good about themselves. All children and teens should get at least an hour of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day, yet many don't.

So, what can you do? Get children outside and embrace exercise. Make it enjoyable, and your children are more likely to be and stay active. These suggestions can help:

- **Invite your child's friends to play outside.** Old favorites, such as tag, kickball, and hide-and-seek, are fun for children of all ages.
- **Explore your neighborhood together.** Hit the streets on foot or bike instead of driving.
- **Get help with chores.** Have children wash floors, mow the lawn, do some gardening, or walk the dog.
- **Discover an activity your child enjoys and find a club or team.** Look for a program that matches your child's skill level. Offer encouragement when your child wants to try new activities.
- **Have your child volunteer for active community service.** Your child can help clean up local streets, parks, or schoolyards, for instance.
- **Find fun outdoor activities in your community.** As a family, go hiking, take nature walks, or join bicycling groups.
- **Take younger children to parks and playgrounds often.** Find a playgroup with other parents or start one yourself.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; American Heart Association; National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## Bring Water to Outdoor Activities

As the weather heats up, kids spend more time playing outside. You already know it's important for them to stay hydrated during physical activity. But, it matters even more in hot weather. Visit [eatright.org/fitness/sports-and-performance/hydrate-right](https://eatright.org/fitness/sports-and-performance/hydrate-right) for an idea of how much water your child should have each day.

Watch for these signs of dehydration in your child:

- Less playful or active
- Urinating less often or darker urine
- Very sleepy
- Extra fussy
- Sunken eyes
- Cool, discolored hands and feet
- Wrinkled skin

Ask your child's doctor how much to drink when playing sports or doing other outdoor events. Have your child drink water regularly. And, always keep extra water on hand for all activities.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Academy of Pediatrics



# Do Your Kids Still Need Shots?

Vaccines protect children from deadly diseases, and the shots don't end after infancy. Check this chart to see if your child's immunizations are all up-to-date. Talk with your child's doctor to find out when your child may need these shots.

VACCINE	4 – 6 YEARS	7 – 10 YEARS	11 – 12 YEARS	13 – 15 YEARS	16 YEARS	17 – 18 YEARS
Hepatitis B (HepB)	Catch-up*					
Diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (DTaP)	5th dose					
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Catch-up*	May be needed for high-risk children				
Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)	Catch-up*	May be needed for high-risk children				
Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)	4th dose	Catch-up*				
Influenza	Yearly 1 or 2 doses		Yearly 1 dose only			
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	2nd dose	Catch-up*				
Varicella (VAR)	2nd dose	Catch-up*				
Hepatitis A (HepA)	Catch-up*, may also be needed for high-risk children					
Meningococcal (MenACWY-D; MenACWY-CRM)	May be needed for high-risk children		1st dose	Catch-up*	2nd dose	Catch-up*
Tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap)		Catch-up* (if not fully immunized with DTaP)	1st dose	Catch-up*, may also be needed for high-risk children		
Human papillomavirus (HPV)		May be needed for high-risk children	Start series**	Catch-up*		
Meningococcal B		May be needed for high-risk children				
Pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV)	May be needed for high-risk children					

\* If your child has missed a dose of this vaccine at a younger age, he or she will need a catch-up vaccine to be safely vaccinated.

\*\* Both girls and boys should get two doses of the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12. Children who start the vaccine series on or after their 15th birthday need three shots given over six months.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





## HPV Vaccine and Boys: Know the Facts

**T**he HPV vaccine is known for preventing cervical cancer, and for good reason. Health care providers began giving the shot to females nearly 20 years ago. Since then, the rate of cervical precancers linked to common HPV types has dropped 40 percent.

But, HPV eventually infects nearly every sexually active person, male or female. Boys and men also face risks. The virus can cause cancers of the mouth, back of the throat, penis, and anus, along with genital warts.

That's why vaccination matters for boys and girls. In 2011, providers started suggesting the shots for all young people. Ideally, all children should get two doses, 6 to 12 months apart, beginning at age 11 or 12.

### The Cost of Skipping Shots

Only 28 percent of boys in the recommended age group have received the HPV vaccine. That's compared with almost 42 percent of girls.

This low rate is worrying. Parents of boys may not realize:

- The most common cancers caused by HPV are mouth cancer and throat cancer, which affect more males than females.

- Nearly 4 out of 10 HPV-related cancers strike men.
- Each year, more than 14,000 American men develop HPV-related cancers.

Males who get vaccinated will also protect their future partners. This includes women who are at risk for cervical cancer.

### Low Risk, Long-Term Reward

The shots work best when young people get them before becoming sexually active, because preteens make more infection-fighting antibodies than older teens. Preteens need less vaccine than older teens for the same protection. That's why health care providers recommend starting young — as early as age nine. But even if your son is older, it's not too late. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says young adults who aren't already vaccinated can receive HPV shots through age 26.

If you have questions about the HPV vaccine, talk with your child's doctor.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; The Lancet; JAMA Oncology; JAMA; American Academy of Pediatrics

## Juicy Ladybug Treats

### Ingredients

- 1 ripe apple
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter

### Instructions

1. Wash your apple.
2. Have an adult cut your apple in half and remove the core.
3. Place the apple on a plate with the skin facing up.
4. Dip the chocolate chips into the peanut butter.
5. Place the chocolate chips on the apple wherever you like, to make your ladybug's spots.



## Remember to Renew!

We hope you love CHIP as much as we love having your child as a member!

When it comes to your child(ren)'s health, we've got you covered. That's why it's important for us to make sure your membership is updated and renewed.

Once a year, we verify your child(ren)'s eligibility for CHIP. You will receive a Change Reminder Notice, 120 days before the anniversary of enrollment, stating that we will attempt to review your child(ren)'s eligibility by using data available through federal and state databases. This includes your:

- Income
- Employment
- Household size
- Marital status
- Address and Medical insurance coverage

If there are no changes to this information (i.e., current income is similar to the income you previously reported to us), then you're all set. The renewal will be processed automatically, and we will not need any further documentation from you.

If there are changes to this information, you will be sent a letter and Renewal Form. Please complete the Renewal Form, include all documentation of your income, and send it back to us at Independence Blue Cross as soon as possible. The sooner you respond to the request, the more time there will be to resolve any questions and avoid a potential loss of your child's CHIP coverage.

Be sure to follow the instructions on the Notice and Renewal Form. If you have any questions about this renewal process, you can call the CHIP Member Help Team at **1-800-464-5437**.

# Independence

**Independence Blue Cross**  
**1901 Market Street**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19103-1480**  
**1-800-464-5437**  
[www.ibx.com/chip](http://www.ibx.com/chip)

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## Ways to Save on Covered Services

As a Keystone Health Plan East (KHPE) member, there are plenty of ways you can be a smart health care consumer and get the most out of your child's benefits.

### Network Providers

All medical services must be received from CHIP participating providers, unless pre-approved by KHPE or in cases of emergency or urgent care services while out of the service area. Be aware that your network provider might use an out-of-network provider for some services (such as lab work). Check with your provider before you get services.

### Retail Clinics and Urgent Care Centers

Retail clinics and urgent care centers may be better alternatives than the emergency room when your child's doctor is unavailable. You may have lower cost-sharing and a shorter wait when visiting these facilities. Visit an urgent care center for illnesses or injuries that are not life-threatening but need immediate attention. For conditions that are

less serious, such as fevers, colds, and rashes, you can visit a retail health clinic. You can find participating urgent care centers or retail clinics at [ibx.com/providerfinder](http://ibx.com/providerfinder) or by calling the Member Help Team at **1-800-464-5437** (TTY/TDD: 711).

### Save on Prescription Drugs

You might be able to save the most by choosing generic drugs, which are just as safe and effective as brand-name drugs but cost less. Mail-order service is another way to save. You may pay less for your child's prescriptions and get the convenience of a 90-day supply for only two copays delivered right to your home.

### Nutrition Counseling

All our plans allow six free visits per year with an in-network registered dietitian. The dietitian can help you manage your child's nutrition and weight management goals, or help them eat right for a particular health condition, like diabetes.

Independence Blue Cross complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, cuenta con servicios de asistencia en idiomas disponibles de forma gratuita para usted. Llame al 1-800-275-2583 TTY 711.

注意：如果您讲中文，您可以得到免费的语言协助服务。请致电1-800-275-2583。

*Si necesita ayuda para traducir esta información, por favor comuníquese con el departamento de servicios a miembros de Independence Blue Cross al 1-800-464-5437. Estos servicios están disponibles de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 6 p.m. Usuarios del sistema TTY deberán llamar al 711.*