



Pennridge Pediatric Associates

Pointers and Pearls

Fall 2008

TEENS AND EXERCISE

Children ages 9 -13 years of age get about three hours a day of moderate to vigorous exercise. However, by age 15, the teens had dropped to less than an hour of activity on weekdays and just 35 minutes on weekends. A primary reason: computers, video games, and other sedentary activities compete for the attention of outside activity. Lack of exercise a factor in childhood obesity. About one-third of children are overweight, and about 17 percent are obese. Being overweight can lead to serious health consequences, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and increased risk of some types of cancer.

How to motivate your sluggish teen:

- Find an activity your kids like and encourage them to participate; if possible, participate with them.
- Put time limits on activities that involve little or no physical activity, such as television, video games and computer time (2 hours max!).
- Encourage physical activity. After-school intramural sports are good ways for kids to stay active. Other ways include dance or martial arts classes, as well as aerobic exercise sessions.
- Suggest volunteer work or community service. Lugging large bags of dog food at the animal shelter, helping move boxes of food at the food bank, or leading an exercise class at the senior center can be rewarding both physically and emotionally.
- Ask for household help. Teens can get a lot of physical activity by helping with chores around the house, such as mowing the lawn, gardening, vacuuming, shoveling snow, etc.
- Basing their allowance on the amount of chores they perform can be

a great motivator.

- Give them a present. Wrapping up a pair of rollerblades or basketball, or tucking a membership card to a health club in an envelope, can give your kids the gift of good health.
- Make physical activity a daily event. If you can, have your kids walk or bike to school rather than drive; schedule family walks in the evenings or on the weekends, play a little backyard basketball, etc.
- Model good physical behavior. If your children see that you are active, they will follow suit.



CHEERLEADING

Over the past decade, cheerleading has evolved from simple dance steps to gymnastic performances complete with aerials, tumbling routines and human pyramids several tiers high. Falls from pyramids are a common cause of the injuries, sometimes leading to concussions, skull fractures, paralysis and death. Other injuries occur during back flips and when cheerleaders are tossed into the air and dropped.

How to prevent cheerleading injuries

- Make sure your child's coach is qualified and experienced.
- All practice sessions should be supervised by the coach.
- Before attempting any stunts, each cheerleader should receive proper training.

- Proper spotting techniques should always be used; someone should always be nearby to catch an errant toss.
- Proper mats should be used.
- Cheerleaders should wear sturdy athletic shoes and remove all jewelry.
- Do not allow pyramids more than two levels high.
- Avoid the use of mini trampolines during routines.
- Make sure the squad has a Catastrophic Injury Emergency Plan in place; information on this plan can be found at www.nationalcheersafety.com.

PROBIOTICS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW MIGHT THEY BE HELPFUL

Probiotics are bacteria that help maintain the natural balance of healthy "good" bacteria in the digestive tract. Some studies (not all) show that many infants (not all) given foods with probiotics had decreases in episodes of spitting up and in average daily crying time. Probiotics might also prevent or result in somewhat faster recovery from some types of diarrhea. Unfortunately the exact type of bacteria and the amount given make a difference, and the available products are not standardized so it not easy to tell which products advertised as containing probiotics are effective. A good source of these microorganisms is yogurt, a fermented milk product that has been around for centuries. Even those who are lactose intolerant can often eat yogurt because the culturing process makes it more digestible than milk.

- How to choose a yogurt for your baby
- Buy whole milk (full-fat) yogurt for

babies under the age of 1-2; after that age, reduced-fat yogurt is the best choice to keep hearts healthy and avoid obesity.

- Avoid sugar-laden, fruit-on-the-bottom, and pudding-style yogurts. Choose yogurts specifically made for babies, or plain yogurt simply flavored with pureed fruit.
- Look for yogurts that have only two main ingredients: milk and live cultures. Avoid products with fillers and additives such as starches, fructose syrup and gelatin. Also, look for brands processed without the use of antibiotics and growth hormones.
- Opt for a large container of plain yogurt without fillers and sugar; it is less expensive and will allow you to add your own flavorings. Try mixing plain yogurt with applesauce and fruit purees.
- Don't buy yogurt that has been "heat treated after culturing." While heat-treating prolongs the shelf-life, it also kills most of the health benefits of yogurt.
- If milk allergies or lactose intolerance run in your family, talk to us before giving yogurt to your baby.

FLUE VACCINE—IT'S NOT JUST FOR "HIGH RISK" CHILDREN ANYMORE...

The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics has been moving towards universal flu immunization for several years and this year have made the recommendation that flu vaccine should be given to all children 6 months to 18 years of age.

The reasons for the recommendation:

1. Children 6 months to 18 years of age have the highest rate of influenza infections
2. It will decrease number of flu-caused secondary infections (primarily ear infections and pneumonia).
3. It will decrease the number of times a child needs antibiotics
4. Children are the most likely source of flu in adults, so reducing the number of children sick with flu is expected to decrease the number of their adult contacts who get flu (and reduce their time lost from work because they are sick or they have to take care of a sick child)

5. It will reduce or eliminate the 50-150 childhood deaths from influenza that occur each year, the majority of which occur in children with no underlying problems that would put them at higher risk.

For flu vaccine appointments please call 215-257-2727 (Sellersville) or 215-256-1999 (Harleysville).

DOES YOUR CHILD GET HER FRUITS AND VEGGIES?

The Centers for Disease Control says kids aren't getting enough of a good thing. Fruits and vegetables are critical to promoting good health and keeping disease at bay. Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals and fiber that help protect against chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, some types of cancers, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure. However, studies show that many children get less than half the recommended daily amount of these super foods.

Tips for getting more fruits and veggies into your child's diet

- Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter. Refrigerate cut up fruits and vegetables in small bags for easy snacks on the run.
- Serve fruits and vegetables at every meal. Add grated or cut vegetables to entrees, side dishes, and soups. Top off cereal with fruits or add frozen fruits to smoothies.
- Pack the refrigerator, freezer and cupboard with pre-cut, frozen and canned vegetables so that it is easier for you to prepare meals and snacks that include them.
- Challenge family members to reach their daily fruits and vegetable goal. Reward the winner with a prize of his or her choice.
- Ask that fruits and vegetables be offered at school functions and after school programs.
- Let children choose which fruits and vegetables to serve and how to incorporate them into their favorite meals.
- Keep trying. For some foods, it may take multiple times before a child acquires a taste for it.
- Try feeding different textures of fruits and vegetables to your child.
- Offer new fruits and vegetables in combination with old favorites to

show your child a variety of smells, textures and colors.

- Add vegetables to any whole grain pasta dish or pizza; fruit is a great topping for low-fat or fat-free yogurt.
 - Model healthy eating habits to kids by eating fruits and vegetables often. Kids tend to follow the actions of older family members.
- For other ideas on how many fruits and vegetables your child needs, plus recipe ideas, go to www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

FROM THE SECRETARIES

A parent must accompany their child for the first well check. When someone other than a parent is bringing a child younger than 18 to the office for other visits we must have written permission from the parent in order to see the child. To comply with privacy regulations, we will be asking patients who are 18 and older to sign an authorization form which allows or prohibits us from sharing information with their parents.

Please visit our website, www.pennridgepediatrics.com, which provides current information regarding PPA's doctors, practice, and policies. The website also features a search engine providing current medical information on hundreds of medical topics written by renowned organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics.

PPA is happy to announce that we are now participating providers with the "Health America" insurance network which also includes all "Coventry" and "Health Assurance" products.

RESEARCH AT PPA

Studies expected to start in the near future: an improved pneumococcal vaccine for children 1-9 years of age and a meningococcal vaccine that we hope will be helpful in preventing infection against a strain of the meningococcal bacteria that is not in the currently licensed vaccine.

If you have any questions about these studies please call Bonnie Pforter at 215-257-2727.