Healthy and Strong, All Year Long

Child Health Advocacy Institute
Awareness Calendar

Children's Hospital Colorado
Mental health

The ability to deal with stress doesn’t come wired into us — it’s a skill kids learn. One of the best ways to teach positive coping skills is to model them. Deep breathing, muscle relaxation (tensing and relaxing muscles throughout your body) and even going for a walk are great ways to relax. Practice these techniques when kids aren’t stressed, and during stressful situations, using them can come as naturally as riding a bike.

Nutrition and physical activity

Good sleep, good nutrition and regular physical exercise are essential to kids’ ability to rise to the challenges of everyday life. Kids need a lot of sleep — 8 to 10 hours a night for teens, 9 to 11 for school-aged kids, and 10 to 14 for preschoolers and toddlers. Kids should get two fruit and three vegetable servings every day — half of your child’s plate at each meal. Spending time together as a family on relaxing activities is a great way to bond and have fun, while building a foundation of healthy habits in the process.

First 1,000 Days

In babies born with spina bifida, an opening in the spine leaves the spinal cord open to potential injury — and a damaged spinal cord may not be able to do the important job of getting messages to and from the brain. Folic acid, a common supplement found in prenatal vitamins, can lower babies’ risk of spina bifida and other spinal defects. It’s most effective taken before pregnancy and throughout the first month.

Staying safe

Winter recreational activities are a ton of fun. Here are a few tips for staying safe in the great outdoors:

- Wear warm clothes, dress in layers and stay dry.
- Stay hydrated. Have kids drink fluids before, during and after their activities.
- Even on cloudy days in the mountains, sun rays can be harmful. Don’t forget sunscreen!
- Wear helmets when appropriate and make sure they’re properly fitted and fit the activity. Also make sure they’re certified to meet federal safety standards.

Breathing easy

Make sure everyone who takes care of your baby knows the fundamentals of safe sleep.

Babies should sleep:

- Alone, and never with an adult, child or pet
- On their back
- In their own crib or bassinet
- On a firm sleep surface
- With no loose bedding
- In a sleep sack or onesie
- In the room with caregivers

Babies should never sleep:

- On their stomach or side
- With anyone else, even caregivers
- In an adult bed
- On a couch
- Under a blanket
- On a pillow
- With stuffed animals
- In a crib with bumper pads
- Near tobacco smoke or marijuana smoke
Oral health

Good oral health habits start early. Help your toddler brush their teeth twice a day and use oral care products designed for children. Kids are likely to brush more often and for longer if they use colorful toothbrushes and toothpaste that fit in small mouths.

See the dentist every six months. Visiting the dentist will keep their teeth healthy and strong so they can continue to eat, grow and smile.

Most toothpastes contain fluoride, but toothpaste alone won’t fully protect your child’s teeth. Check to see if your water is fluoridated, and if it isn’t, ask your dentist about fluoride supplements.

Limit sugary foods and drinks. Soda, candy and juice — even if it’s “100 percent juice” — fuel germs and can erode enamel, causing cavities. When your child does eat or drink sugary foods, have them rinse or brush their teeth soon after.

As your child gets older, add flossing to the routine. You might need to help them at first — and be a role model by flossing, too. They’re much more likely to take care of their teeth if you take care of yours.

Staying safe

It only takes an instant for a child to get seriously burned — but they can’t be watched every second of the day. Luckily, parents can help stop burn injuries by setting up a safe home environment:

- Set your water heater at a comfortable temperature, but not higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep all electrical cords out of reach of children.
- Cooking as a family is a great way to make lasting memories. Take steps to keep kids safe in the kitchen.
- Put out campfires completely with water.
- Glass fronted gas fireplace doors get extremely hot. Use safety barriers and keep a close watch on kids around them.

Stop by our Safety Store for a free toothbrush and toothpaste.
March

Kick Butts Day
National Nutrition Month
National Poison Prevention Week
World Oral Health Day

Nutrition and physical activity
Kids should get two fruit and three vegetable servings every day — a serving is about the size of the child’s fist. Fill half of your child’s plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal.

Oral health
The benefits of oral health go beyond your child’s beautiful smile. A healthier mouth means a healthier child.

Staying safe
Learn the toll-free nationwide number for Poison Control: 800-222-1222. Program it into your phone and keep it near every landline. You can call them with any questions, and they can help you decide if you need to get medical attention.

Breathing easy
Asthma happens when the airways in the lungs get swollen and inflamed, making breathing hard. It usually develops during childhood. Being around smoke can cause an asthma attack and increases the chance that a child will have to go to the hospital.

If you are caring for a child with asthma, don’t allow smoking inside your home or car. If you can, quit smoking. Call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) for help from the Colorado QuitLine.

Safety Store
Stop by our Safety Store for a free toothbrush and toothpaste and get 15% off all poison prevention products, including medication lock boxes.
First 1,000 Days
Everyone has a role in keeping children safe. Learn about the warning signs of child abuse and neglect. To report child abuse or neglect in Colorado, call 844-CO-4-KIDS (844-264-5437).

Staying hydrated
Safe Kids Worldwide’s Play Safety High 5 Checklist includes the following tips:

Make sure your young athlete has a water bottle to bring to practices and games. For every 20 minutes of play, a young athlete should drink about 10 gulps of water.

Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion and encourage athletes to speak up if they get injured.

Make sure your child’s coach has all your emergency contact information.

For wheeled sports, make sure your child wears a helmet and take the helmet safety fit test to check that it fits properly.

Check that the playgrounds where your children play have shock-absorbing surfaces. Rubber, synthetic turf, sand, pea gravel, wood chips or mulch are the safest options. Also look for hazards, such as rusted or broken equipment. Alert the school or the local parks and recreation office if a playground is unsafe.

Breathing easy
Asthma is easier to control when kids avoid things that can trigger an attack. Five big asthma triggers:

Smoke
- Don’t allow smoking inside your home or car, and quit smoking if you can.
- Avoid wood-burning heat stoves, fireplaces and avoid campfires.

Air pollution
- Have your child stay indoors when the pollution count is high.
- You can learn about the current air quality in your area from AirNow.

Strong smells
- Avoid using air fresheners, perfume, cologne or hairspray.

Illness
- Watch your child’s asthma closely when they have cold symptoms and make sure they get a flu shot every year.

Cold air
- Have your child wear a clean scarf or a pulled-up turtleneck around their face.
- Have your child breathe through their nose when outdoors in cold air.

Stop by our Safety Store for a free growth chart for your child. “Calm Baby Gently” books are available for $3.99.
**May**

**Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month**

**Birth Defects Awareness Week**

**Mental Health Awareness Month**

**National Bike Safety Month**

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**Mental health**

The basics of good mental health and good physical health are basically the same. Adequate sleep, a healthy diet and consistent physical activity keep kids (and adults) feeling mentally and physically at their best.

Beyond those basics, good mental health is in many ways about learning how to get along with and relate to others in constructive, mutually helpful ways. You can model it by spending time with your child. Make time for fun and play, and try not to overschedule. If possible, leave free time in the week to be together, talk and play.

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**Staying safe**

Make sure kids have a bike helmet fitted to their current head size (not one they’ll grow into). Use the ‘Two-Finger Test’ to make sure you have your helmet on properly.

Place two fingers between your eyebrows and the front edge of the helmet. Only two fingers should fit in this space.

Put two fingers underneath each ear in a “V” shape. This is where the straps should go.

Put two fingers under the chin strap to make sure that only two fingers fit snugly. If you can fit more than two fingers, tighten the strap.

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**First 1,000 Days**

Healthy habits before pregnancy can stop some birth defects and improve the baby’s health. Pave the way for a thriving baby by eating a balanced diet, avoiding smoking or alcohol, and getting good control over maternal health conditions like diabetes.

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**Breathing easy**

Untreated asthma can make it harder for a child to breathe throughout their life and interfere with your child’s participation in sports and other activities. Asthma is also one of the leading causes of school absences.

Know the signs of asthma. If your child wheezes or has a cough that lasts more than two weeks after a cold, get it checked out by your primary care provider.

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**Safety Store**

Stop by our Safety Store for a free mental wellness journal and get 15% off all youth and adult bike helmets — plus a free helmet fitting.
June

Home Safety Month

Staying safe

Many common household items use button batteries — remotes, light-up toys and even greeting cards that play music. Keep these items out of the reach of small children, and throw away button batteries properly, where children won’t find them. Even expired batteries can cause serious damage. If you think your child might have swallowed a button battery, go to the emergency department right away or call 911. **Don’t make your child throw up or let them eat or drink anything until a doctor has seen them.**

Learn the toll-free nationwide Poison Control hotline number (800-222-1222). Program it into your phone and keep it near every landline. You can call them with any question, and they will help you decide if you need to seek medical attention.

Test your smoke alarms each month. Make sure you have them installed correctly and use Daylight Saving Time as a reminder to change the batteries.

Talk with your kids about fire safety and create a family plan for what you’ll do if a fire does break out. There are many great tools available to make these talks a little easier. After you create your plan, have fire drills at home and practice your escape.

Children’s Hospital Colorado Safety Store

Get 15% off all home safety products at our Safety Store.
July

Fireworks Safety Month
National Minority Mental Health Month
National Youth Sports Week
UV Safety Month

Stop by our Safety Store for a free mental wellness journal and get 10% off our sunscreen products.

Nutrition and physical activity

To keep in top shape for sports, kids need to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

Dehydration happens when the body loses more water than it takes in (through sweating, for example), and it can lead to heat exhaustion or even heatstroke.

Have kids take water breaks during practices and games – don’t wait for a child to tell you they are thirsty. Kids can stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water starting 30 minutes before a game or practice and every 15 or 20 minutes during. Drinking water afterward is equally important. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- 5 oz. for an 88-pound child every 20 minutes
- 9 oz. for a 132-pound adolescent every 20 minutes

To make it easy for your athlete, make sure they have a water bottle for every practice and game. Kids will know if they’re drinking enough water if their pee is clear or the color of lemonade.

Mental health

You know your child best, meaning you’re in the best position to notice changes in your child’s behavior. If your child changes their eating or sleeping habits, withdraws from activities they used to enjoy, or starts having fears or anxieties that interfere with daily life, these can be signs of a mental health problem.

A child who’s having trouble controlling their emotions, making friends or calming down when upset might benefit from some extra help. It never hurts to mention these problems to professionals like your child’s pediatrician or school psychologist, or to have your child evaluated if you have concerns.

If you or someone you know is considering harming themselves, contact the Colorado Crisis Services at 1-844-493-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255.

A child talking about suicide or hurting or threatening to hurt themselves or others needs immediate help.

Staying safe

Fireworks Safety:
Sparklers can burn at temperatures as hot as 3,000 degrees. That’s hot enough to ignite clothing or cause severe skin burns. And they can keep those temperatures for a long time after they fizzle out. One common summer burn injury results when a child steps on a spent sparkler another child left on the ground.

UV safety:
Sunscreen is only that — a screen. Higher SPFs can block most of the sun’s rays, but no sunscreen blocks 100%. Sunscreen should be a part of a total sun protection program that includes hats, protective clothing and sunglasses. Avoid exposure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when UV radiation is most intense, and wait until after 3 p.m. to take kids to the pool. Water reflects UV rays, too, so faces and lips often need extra protection.
The start of a school year can be challenging for kids and parents, with new teachers, bullying, social pressure and much more. With a little preparation and the right attitude, shifting from a laid-back summer to the routine of school doesn’t have to be difficult.

**Talk about it.**
Ask your child what worries them about starting school and talk about the fun and exciting things the new school year can bring.

**Stay positive.**
If you show enthusiasm for the new year, your kids will pick up on it and turn that nervous energy into excitement.

**Establish fun traditions.**
Do something fun the night before school starts or have a special breakfast before the first day. Make it a day they look forward to every year.

**Get back on schedule.**
Start using the “school year” bedtimes, wake-up times and mealtimes well ahead of the start of school.

**Don’t overschedule.**
Include your child in decisions about what or how many activities they are involved in. Ask them how much they can handle in addition to school work.

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**First 1,000 Days**

**Breastfeeding:**
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby’s life, followed by breastfeeding plus solid foods until at least the baby’s first birthday.

Compared to babies who never or only partially breastfeed, breastfed babies have less respiratory illness, ear infections, stomach issues and allergies, including asthma, eczema and dermatitis. They experience lower rates of adolescent and adult obesity, and their rate of sudden unexpected infant death (often called SIDS) is reduced by more than a third.

**Immunizations:**
Vaccines have led to major improvements in child health. Many of the illnesses you or your parents had as children, from chickenpox to polio to measles, no longer affect most children today thanks to vaccinations.

As parents and caregivers, we all want to keep our children safe and know what goes into their bodies. As a result, vaccines have come under scrutiny in recent years, with some parents questioning their safety and necessity. The truth is that vaccines save lives and protect against the spread of disease, vastly reducing risk for not only immunized children, but also for the children around them. Most reactions from vaccines, such as a sore arm or slight fever, are very minor and do not last long, whereas the diseases they prevent are often severe and can be fatal.

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Stop by the Safety Store for free sidewalk chalk and a fun outdoor activity to do with your family.
September

Common Asthma Triggers

Fruits and Veggies – More Matters Month

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week

National Suicide Prevention Week

Mental health

If you feel someone is in danger of hurting themselves or others, get help. Call the Suicide Prevention Hotline or talk to a professional. Hospitals also offer psychiatric services in emergencies.

Talk to your kids about what to do if a friend is thinking of suicide: Don’t try to deal with it yourself. Go to an adult you trust right away.

Mental health and suicide resources:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255
Colorado Crisis Line: 844-493-8255
Children’s Colorado Pediatric Mental Health Institute: 720-777-6200

Nutrition and physical activity

Many factors linked to childhood obesity are cultural: more sweetened beverages, bigger portion sizes, more eating out compared to cooking at home, more television, more video games, less exercise and fewer physical education classes in school.

The biggest factor for childhood obesity: eating too many calories and exercising too little.

To stay healthy, kids should get two fruit and three vegetable servings every day — a serving is about the size of the child’s fist. Fill half of your child’s plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal.

Staying safe

The Safety Store at Children’s Hospital Colorado offers a variety of car seats at discounted prices. All proceeds benefit our hospital’s injury prevention outreach and education programs.

Breathing easy

Asthma is a chronic condition, but certain “triggers” can set off attacks. Common triggers include:

- Tobacco smoke
- Colds and respiratory viral infections
- Exercise
- Strong odors
- Perfumes or cleaning agents
- Environmental allergens (including trees, grasses and pets)
- Dust
- Mold or mildew
- Cold air
- Food allergies
- Triggers are specific to each child, but smoking and secondhand smoke have been found to have a strong negative effect on children’s asthma. Protect your child from secondhand smoke by keeping your home and car smoke-free.

Safety Store

Take 15% off all car seats at our Safety Store.
October

Children under age 6 are at higher risk for lead poisoning. If you live in a house or apartment that was built before 1978, make sure children cannot get to peeling paint or areas covered with lead-based paint, such as window sills. Wash children’s hands and toys to remove dust and dirt - both can contain lead.

Staying safe

Drivers typically aren’t looking for pedestrians — they’re looking for other cars — and kids are smaller than adults. Teach kids to make themselves visible to drivers: raise and wave their hand, stand on the curb and make eye contact with the driver of a vehicle to make sure the driver sees them there.

Teen driving:

Since Colorado enacted a Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law in 1999, traffic-related fatalities for teen drivers have decreased by half. The law helps teens gain more experience on the road while keeping the number of kids in the car to a minimum. Carrying passengers, particularly other teens, increases crash risk for teen drivers. You can help enforce this law at home to keep your kids safer. Consider creating your own safe driving contract with your teen, with consequences if they break it.

Fire prevention:

Home fires are the most common emergency in the United States, and children are at greatest risk for injury and fatality. Help prevent fires with these safety tips:

- Test your smoke alarms each month and make sure you have them installed correctly. Use Daylight Saving Time as a reminder to change the batteries.
- Talk with your kids about fire safety and create a family plan for what you’ll do if a fire does break out. There are many great tools available to make these talks a little easier. After you create your plan, have fire drills at home and practice your escape.

First 1,000 Days

Most deaths due to sudden unexpected infant death happen in babies between 2 and 4 months of age, most often during the winter weather months.

- Safe Kids Worldwide shares ways to help keep your baby safe:
- Babies should always sleep in a safe crib, bassinet or pack-n-play.
- Lay your baby on their back for every sleep.
- A firm mattress covered with a tight-fitting crib sheet is all you need in the crib. Avoid loose bedding and blankets.
- Room-sharing is a safer option than having your baby sleep in bed with you. Place your baby’s crib, play yard or bassinet in your room for feeding and close contact.
- Remember to always return your baby to their own crib when you’re ready to go back to sleep.

Children’s Health Month
International Walk to School Day
SIDS Awareness Month
National Teen Driver Safety Week
Fire Prevention Week
National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Take 15% off all infant sleep sacks at our Safety Store. “Sleep Baby, Safe and Snug” books are available for $3.99.
First 1,000 Days

What happens to children during the first two years of life makes an impact on lifelong health and wellbeing. While good relationships help build the foundation for a healthy mind and body, bad experiences can have the opposite effect. Young children depend on their caregivers to protect them from these negative events.

To lay the foundation for a healthy, happy life, parents can connect with their baby in little ways, every day. Over time, these repeated connections create permanent pathways in your baby’s brain that get stronger each day — and last a lifetime. The stronger the foundation, the more likely it is that your baby will be healthy, connected and ready to learn.

November is Prematurity Awareness Month.

March of Dimes provides tips to reduce your risk for early labor and birth. Some risk factors are things you can’t change, like having a premature birth in a previous pregnancy. Others are things you can do something about, like quitting smoking.

Here’s what you can do to reduce your risk for preterm labor and premature birth:

• Get to a healthy weight before pregnancy and gain the right amount of weight during pregnancy.
• Don’t smoke, drink alcohol, use street drugs, or abuse prescription drugs.
• Go to your first prenatal care checkup as soon as you think you’re pregnant.
• Get treated for chronic health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and thyroid problems.
• Protect yourself from infections.
• Reduce your stress.
• Wait at least 18 months between giving birth and getting pregnant again.

Stop by our Safety Store for a free growth chart to help track your child’s physical and emotional development from 6 months to 5 years of age.
Many common household devices use button batteries — remotes, light-up toys and even greeting cards that play music. Keep these devices out of the reach of small children, and dispose of button batteries properly, where children won’t find them.

Even expired batteries can cause serious damage. If you think your child might have swallowed a button battery, go to the emergency department right away or call 911. Don’t make your child throw up or let them eat or drink anything until a doctor has seen them.

Staying safe

Here are some simple tips families can use now to help protect themselves from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning:

- Install UL-listed CO alarms on every level of the home and in sleeping areas.
- Have furnaces and fireplaces inspected annually.
- Do not use un-vented, gas-powered space heaters or generators inside the home.
- Do not warm up cars in attached garages or near doors or windows where exhaust fumes can enter the home.
- Never use gasoline-powered snow blowers in enclosed spaces.
- Consider bringing a CO alarm when traveling or camping.

Resources and tips provided by the Child Health Advocacy Institute at Children’s Hospital Colorado.

Take 15% off all carbon monoxide alarms at our Safety Store.
10% OFF any safety product

Children’s Hospital Colorado offers a Safety Store to help keep kids safe.

Present this coupon at time of checkout. Limit one coupon per visit.

Through innovation, partnership, and advocacy, we harness community strengths to enhance health equity and increase access to services to improve the health of children and families.