

# GOOD HEALTH *for kids*

A Health Newsletter Produced  
by Dell Children's Medical Center  
of Central Texas and the Austin  
Independent School District  
Student Health Services Program

Summer 2008



## Free Program Teaches Diabetes Prevention

The exciting "Healthy Kids" program offers free diabetes-prevention classes for children ages 5-18 who are overweight or who have other risk factors for developing diabetes. Families who attend will receive information about healthy food choices, benefits of exercise and the importance of choosing a healthier lifestyle to prevent diabetes. Snacks and amazing prizes are also provided!

The program is FREE, but registration is required. Classes are available in English and Spanish, and are held at various locations around Austin including the East Communities YMCA, Rosewood-Zaragosa Clinic, Seton Kozmetsky Clinic, Seton McCarthy Clinic and Seton Topfer Clinic.

Please call (512) 324-4911 for more information or to register.



## Smart Tips for Summer

### HELPING TO PREVENT WEIGHT GAIN

Now that school is out, many parents are looking for ways to keep their kids entertained and healthy during the hot summer months.

Research shows that children tend to gain weight at a faster rate – double that of the rest of the year – during the summer. One reason may be because it isn't easy for parents to duplicate the eating and exercise regimen offered at school.

However, one way to keep kids moving is to schedule structured activities. Pediatrician Roberto L. Rodriguez stresses the importance of scheduled activities such as long walks in the evening. Walking is an activity for the entire family and most young kids are capable of walking a mile. If possible, walk to the park, play and then walk back. Otherwise, you can walk in your neighborhood or on one of Central Texas' numerous trails.

Along with increasing physical activity, limiting television time during the summer is also important. Excess TV viewing with its fast-food advertising is linked to obesity in children. Limiting the time children view these types of advertisements will be beneficial to their weight and overall health.

Monitoring eating habits is another very important way to minimize weight gain. Dr. Rodriguez said, "Stay away from fruit juices; as they are high in sugar and offer little nutritional value. Instead, children should drink plenty of water." He also highly recommends keeping healthy snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables in the house and avoiding junk food. Here are some options:

#### Fruits

- Strawberries (1 cup, 49 calories, 2.5 g fiber, high in vitamin C and potassium)
- Blueberries (1 cup, 83 calories, 3.5 g fiber, high in vitamins A, C and E)
- Melons such as cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon (1 cup balls, 40-60 calories, high in vitamins A, C and potassium)
- Peaches (1 cup slices, 66 calories, 2.5 g fiber, high in vitamins A, C and potassium)



#### Veggies

- Baby carrots (1 cup, 54 calories, 4.8 g fiber, high in vitamins A, C, B6 and potassium)
- Cherry tomatoes (1 cup, 31 calories, 1.6 g fiber, high in vitamins A, C, B6, iron, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium)

Kids are naturally excited about summer and parents can share in the excitement and make the most of the break by scheduling regular exercise and providing healthy food choices. With these tips and routines in place, summer is sure to be a breeze!

# It's Time to Immunize!

Students must be current in their immunizations before they can return to school. Throughout the summer, several community locations will offer immunization clinics for students who will need one or more vaccinations before the 2008-09 school year begins Aug. 25.

Families of students needing an immunization should have received a notice at the end of the school year. In addition, Student Health Services staff is contacting families by phone to let them know their child needs immunizations.

If you have questions about your child's immunizations, clinic dates and locations, or for other information, please contact your child's school nurse or call (512) 324-0195, Children's/AISD Student Health Services Administrative Office. You can also call 2-1-1 Information and Referral Line or visit [www.austinvaccinates.org](http://www.austinvaccinates.org) for more information on AISD's vaccination program.

## A NEW NAME AND NEW MOBILE UNIT FOR SKIPPY EXPRESS

In late June, the Skippy Express Program will receive a brand new mobile clinic with two exam rooms, a laboratory and much more space. At that time, the name for Skippy Express will change to Children's Health Express, a department of Dell Children's Medical Center. The program will have a new unit and new name, and it will also expand its coverage to new sites and provide services on additional days.

Despite all the changes, the mission of the Children's Health Express will remain the same – to provide care for children who do not have insurance coverage. After providing care, the program staff will refer families to a community clinic to receive ongoing care and find a medical home. The Children's Health Express program is working on plans to become the primary provider and medical home for children in the near future. The program hopes to accept all insurance plans.

To make an appointment or for more information, please call the new telephone number at (512) 324-0260.

## Children and Asthma **KNOW THE FACTS**

Understanding asthma can save a life. Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. A "flare up" can be a scary experience, as increased inflammation, constriction of the airway's smooth muscle and excess mucus production make breathing difficult. Asthma can be fatal, but it can also be successfully managed.

First, it helps to know that asthma is considered a genetic condition. If one parent has asthma, each of their children has a 1 in 3 likelihood of having it. If both parents have asthma, the probability for each child goes up to 7 in 10. Anyone can have it, but asthma most commonly occurs in children with allergies, eczema or a family history of asthma.

One of the primary ways to manage asthma in children is to understand and control the factors that can set off an attack. These "triggers" include allergens, weather changes, perfume, pet dander, exercise or exposure to tobacco smoke.

Medication is another key element in managing asthma in children. A child's pediatrician may prescribe one or more medications to help control the asthma. Managing the child's intake is an important responsibility of parents and other adults. These medications may be of two types: "control" and "rescue." The first aims to prevent flare ups; the second aims to provide immediate relief in case one occurs. The doctor may also work with you to develop an asthma action plan, so you and your child can determine what to do in case of a flare up.

Proper asthma management is very important. If you believe your child shows any signs or symptoms of asthma (difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing, tightness in the chest), consult your pediatrician as soon as possible. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.

Source: *Asthma and Allergy*, "Asthma Facts and Figures."

## Have a 'Safe Kids' Summer

Here are a few swimming safety tips to ensure your kids have a fun summer:



- Always watch your children when they are playing in or near the water.
- Install fencing around all sides of a home pool or spa. The fencing should be at least 5 feet high and have self-closing and self-latching gates.
- Always wear a life jacket when on a boat, near open bodies of water or when taking part in water sports.
- Make sure the life jacket fits properly.
- Teach your children to swim after age 4.
- Never dive into water that is less than 9 feet deep.

  
**dell children's**  
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A member of the  Seton Family of Hospitals

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