

KidsFirst

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A publication of **Texas Children's Health Plan CHIP and STAR Members** ages 12-17 and their parents.

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Texas Children's Health Plan
P.O. Box 301011
Houston, TX 77230-1011

Texas Children's
Health Plan



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Cough medicine does not work as well as you think

The cough is one of the best defenses the lungs have. Mucus traps bacteria. Coughing gets rid of the mucus and the bacteria goes with it. Without a good, productive cough, children can much more easily get pneumonia (lung infection) and lung damage.

Research studies show that cough medicine does not work to reduce cough from a cold. That means that giving cough medicine is no better than giving no medicine at all. It also puts the child at risk for side effects from the medicine. Studies comparing honey to cough medicine found that honey helped the cough, while cough medicine did not help.

When I speak to pediatricians, most of them know that cough medicine does not work, but they prescribe it anyway. When I ask why, they say the parents expect it. If a child has a cold with a cough and the doctor does not prescribe cough medicine the parent thinks that the doctor has not done his or her job. Most doctors are relieved when a parent says that they do not want cough medicine for their child. So the next time your child has a cough with a cold, remember that you don't have to give her cough medicine to make it go away. Talk with your doctor about other options for helping your child's cough and follow the helpful tips below.

Harold J. Farber, MD, MSPH

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Pulmonary Section
Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital
Associate Medical Director, Texas Children's Health Plan

4 Tips to Help Your Child's Cough and Cold

1. Stay well hydrated. Chicken soup is great!
2. If a child is over the age of 1, a teaspoon of honey can help relieve a cough. Don't give honey to an infant under the age of 1. This increases the risk for infant botulism.
3. Remember, the cough protects the lungs. The cold should get better in a few days.
4. See a doctor right away if there is high fever, difficulty breathing, fast breathing, or tightness in the chest.



Honey Elixir Recipe

Don't let cold and flu season knock you for a loop. Stock up on this home remedy to relieve symptoms that accompany the cold and flu. It's even delicious when you're feeling great!

What you need:

- A large mug
- Boiling water
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon dried ginger or 1 inch fresh ginger grated
- 1 tablespoon honey

Directions:

- Boil water.
- Squeeze the juice of lemon into your hands to catch the seeds and let juice go into glass or mug.
- Add dried ginger. If using fresh ginger, cut the peel of an inch of ginger and grate it into cup.
- Add honey.
- Add water. Sip until done. Be careful, it's hot!

Make healthy holiday choices

The holidays are a time for gathering and celebration. From holiday parties to family gatherings, people tend to eat and drink more during this time of year. To celebrate good health this season, follow these tips to enjoy the holidays without overindulging.



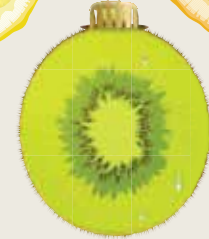
Stop eating if you are full.



Eat healthy snacks in between meals.



Enjoy a serving of dessert, but monitor yourself and think about what you are eating.



Exercise! Go on a walk with family or friends after a holiday meal. Daily exercise will help keep you healthy for the holidays.



Stay away from junk food! Pick fruits and vegetables to satisfy your hunger instead.

Don't go to a party hungry because you will usually eat more than you wanted. Eat a light meal or snack beforehand.

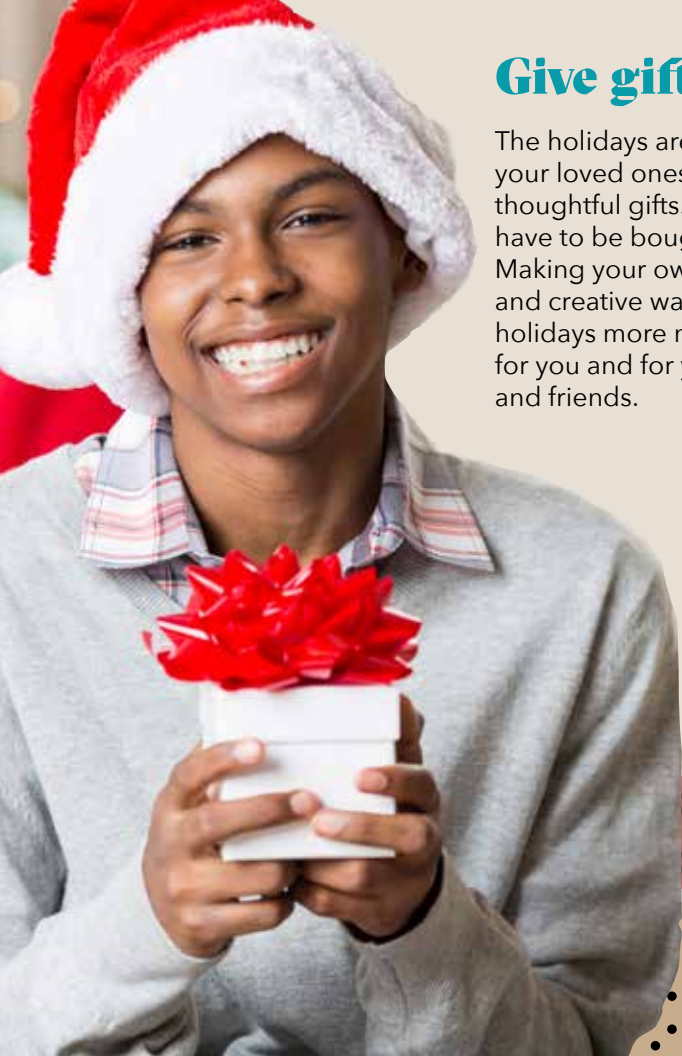
Keep the flu out of your holiday plans

You can keep seasonal flu out of your holiday plans! It's not too late to get your flu shot. Even if you have already had the flu this year, you could get it again because there are several types of the virus each season.

A lot of people spend time in crowds this time of year and the flu starts to spread. Here are some things you can do to help keep the flu from ruining your holidays.

1. Wash your hands often.
2. Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not in your hand.
3. Do the air kiss. You can greet family and friends by giving them a hug and kissing the air near their cheek.
4. Don't use your fingers. Use serving utensils or cutlery to serve and eat food.
5. Write your name on your cup. Instead of using glasses or original containers, use disposable ones and write names on them.
6. Carry hand sanitizer with you. Use it often.
7. Get enough sleep. Lack of sleep weakens your immune system which makes it easier to get sick.
8. Stay away from other people if you are sick. If you feel you are getting sick, stay home and rest.
9. Keep your distance. When you are in a crowd, such as a church service or party, try to keep several feet away from other people.

Source: thealdennetwork.com



Give gifts with meaning

The holidays are a great time to show your loved ones how much you care with thoughtful gifts. But presents don't always have to be bought in a store! Making your own gifts is a fun and creative way to make the holidays more meaningful for you and for your family and friends.



Here are some great ideas for homemade holiday presents!

Recycled picture frame - Reuse a cardboard box and make it into a picture frame by cutting out a large rectangle and decorating it with paint, glitter, printed tape, or other fun craft items. Then print out a special photo to put inside the frame.

Personal artwork - Make a unique piece of art for someone you love, like a drawing, painting, or collage.

Family tree - Look into your family history and create a one-of-a-kind family tree to give to your parent, grandparent, or relative.

Personalized video - Find videos and pictures of special times you've shared with family or friends, then put them together into a new mini-movie to show them.

Source: KidsHealth.org

Healthy holiday chocolate peppermint mousse

What you need:

- 2 medium avocados
- 1 medium banana
- 1/4 cup dark chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon coconut milk (you can also use almond milk or reduced fat cow's milk)
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract

What you do:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender, then blend until smooth.
2. If the mousse is a little too thick, you can add another tablespoon of milk.
3. Spoon into small bowls and serve immediately or put them in the fridge for up to 6 hours.
4. Enjoy!

Source: SuperHealthyKids.com

