

Manage Your Health



SUMMER 2016

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An advertisement for Backpacks4School.org. It features a photograph of two children, a girl and a boy, running happily on a red running track. The girl is wearing a pink shirt and pants, and the boy is wearing a red shirt and grey pants. In the background, there is a large digital scoreboard displaying "AUGUST 6 WEST OAKS MALL". The text "READY SET SCHOOL" is written in large, bold, yellow and red letters across the middle of the image. Below it, the website "BACKPACKS4SCHOOL.ORG" is written in white. The Texas Children's Health Plan logo is in the top right corner. A blue circular badge in the bottom right corner says "We are giving away school supplies!".

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Texas Children's
Health Plan



You are what you breathe!

Breathe well, feel better

Often, what we do hurts breathing. One of the worst things you can do is smoke or be exposed to smoke. Keeping the home and car smoke free is an important. It is best to be a smoke-free family. Did you know that electronic cigarettes (eCigs) and Vapes (other types of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems) cause breathing problems too? Their emissions are not safe to inhale. You can get help quitting. **Call 1-800-QUIT NOW or visit <http://smokefree.gov>.**

Anything that burns is smoke. This includes barbecue pits or grills and open fires like bonfires. If you have asthma, try to stay away from these as much as you can.

Strong smelling household chemicals can also cause breathing problems. Asthma is made worse for many children by air fresheners and plug-ins. Chemicals don't make the air fresh or clean but just cover up odors. Try baking soda instead to absorb odors.

Air pollution also causes breathing problems. Air pollution in the Greater Houston area is often worse during our hot summers. You can find out about current air pollution levels at <https://airnow.gov/>. If air pollution levels are high, try to avoid vigorous outdoor activities.

*Harold J. Farber, MD, MSPH
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Does your child have a **Written Asthma Action Plan?**

Call us at
832-828-1430
if you need
an Asthma
Action Plan.

An Asthma Action Plan is a written guide to help keep your child well and deal with asthma problems. You make this plan with your child's doctor. The plan may change as your child's asthma needs change. You should have a copy at home and at school and with other caregivers.

An Asthma Action Plan includes:

- A daily care plan to help keep your child well and meet goals for asthma control.
- A rescue plan to help your child deal quickly with increasing symptoms.
- A guide for asthma emergencies to help you know when to call the doctor and when you need emergency help.

You can still **have fun** when you have asthma

Children with asthma should be able to run and play and enjoy their summer. Here are a few simple things to remember to keep asthma in control.

- Be careful about what you breathe. Smoke of all kinds hurts the lungs, including tobacco smoke and barbecue smoke.
- When you smoke, you expose your children. Keeping your home and car smoke-free helps, but this usually is not enough to protect them if someone they are close to is a smoker. To stop smoking call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit <http://smokefree.gov> for free help.
- Know your child's asthma medicines. There are two types of asthma medicines.

One is a quick reliever, the other is a long term controller.

Quick relief medicine lets you use it and you feel better right away, but it only lasts for a few hours. Quick relief medicines relieve asthma attacks, but they don't fix the problem. As a rule of thumb, if your child needs his quick relief medicine to relieve asthma symptoms more than twice a week during the day, or if your child wakes up needing his or her inhaler more than twice a month at night, asthma is not in good control. If your child's asthma is not in good control, see your child's doctor.

You may not feel long-term control medicine working. This medicine tells the breathing tubes in the lungs "don't be so sensitive, act like you don't have asthma."

If your child uses long-term control medicine every day, he should feel better and have fewer symptoms within 2 to 4 weeks. When you feel better, you are tempted to stop using the medicine, but don't! The medicine can be the reason that your child is so much better. If you don't know the difference, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

- Have a plan. Ask for a written asthma action plan. This plan goes over what to do when your child is well in order to stay well, what to do when asthma problems are just starting, and what to do if asthma problems are starting to get bad.

Source: Harold J. Farber, MD, MPSH

Watch out for skin infections

Your family's health is important. That's why we want you to know about skin infections. Learn about them on our website.

TexasChildrensHealthplan.org/skininfections

Survive the summer with ADHD

Principals, teachers, and students are counting the days until summer break. During this time many parents and caregivers often stop their child's ADHD medicines.

Before deciding to stop your child's ADHD medicine, talk with his doctor to help you decide what's best for your child.

Here's a few simple tips to help you survive the summer.

- **Keep a routine.** Make sure your child goes to bed at a reasonable hour and around the same time every night. Try to wake him up at the same time each morning.
- **Make a list of activities to do.** When he says he is bored, you can have him choose something from the list. The list can include riding a bike, taking a walk, skateboarding, or going to the park.
- **Serve meals around the same time each day.** It is best if at least one of the meals can include the whole family eating together. You can talk about your day and make plans for the next day.

If you can follow these simple ideas for your ADHD child, your family can have a more enjoyable summer.

Source: Chris Smith, LMSW, LMFT, CCM

Treat your child's ADHD

If your child has ADHD and has been getting treatment, be on the lookout for a welcome packet from Texas Children's Health Plan ADD/ADHD Program.

This packet has helpful information about ADHD. It also has a doctor's visit and medication log. This will help you keep track of doctor and therapy visits.

Texas Children's Health Plan and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) are checking key parts of care for children who are given ADHD medication. You may get follow-up calls to help remind you about the visit.

- Your child should go to a follow-up visit by the prescribing doctor during the first 30 days from the first date the medicine was given.
- Your child should also go to 2 follow-up visits within the next 9 months from a prescribing doctor.



Take charge of your diabetes!

If you have diabetes, it is important to get your blood drawn regularly for lab tests. These tests will help your doctor monitor your health.

Diabetics should have the Hemoglobin A1c drawn at least twice a year. Your doctor may want you to have it done more often than that. You should keep track of your A1c level so you have a record of any changes that may occur. The A1c shows how in control your diabetes is. The American Diabetic Association states that the ideal goal is for this level to remain under 7. Case management staff at Texas Children's Health Plan want to help you stay in control. Lab work for diabetics are reviewed and members with lab work at 9 or above or not completed will be contacted by our staff to see how we might help you.

You should also have your cholesterol checked once a year and have your urine checked for micro albumin on a yearly basis. Ask your doctor if you have any questions.

It is also important for diabetics to have an eye exam each year. This can help the doctor find eye problems associated with diabetes so that your eyesight can be protected. Eye exams are a benefit of your insurance.

Eat summer fruits to stay healthy

Watermelon

Look for: A heavy, symmetrical watermelon with a dried stem and yellowish underside.

To store: Whole watermelons can be stored at room temperature. Once it's cut, refrigerate in an airtight container and eat within 5 days.

Ways to enjoy: In a smoothie, as a popsicle, add to a salad, or eat straight from the rind.

Blackberries

Look for: Shiny berries that are not bruised or leaky.

To store: Refrigerate for 3-6 days, and wash just before using.

Ways to enjoy: Add to your morning cereal, oatmeal, or just fill up a bowl and snack away.

Raspberries

Look for: Dry, plump, and firm raspberries.

To store: Refrigerate and eat within 1-2 days. Do not wash berries until you are ready to eat them.

Ways to enjoy: Add to a salad, smoothie, muffin, or eat with plain, low-fat yogurt or on your salad.

Peaches

Look for: Firm, fuzzy skin that gives with a little pressure of the finger.

To store: Unripe peaches can be kept in a paper bag. Once ripe, store at room temperature and use within 1-2 days.

Ways to enjoy: Add frozen peaches to your tea or water, bake with a little cinnamon, smoothie, eat with cereal, low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese.

Blueberries

Look for: Firm, plump, dry blueberries with a dusty blue color and uniform in size.

To store: Refrigerate for 10-14 days.

Ways to enjoy: On your oatmeal, waffle, fruit kabob, smoothie, or in a salad.

Source: Jenny M. Rowlands, MPH CHES





7- and 30-day mental health follow-up


Has your child been in acute psychiatric care? If so, you may have been informed that your child must have a 7- and 30-day follow-up visit with a mental health professional.

Take your child to an in-network provider within 7 days of release. And again within 30 days of release. We urge you to see a therapist for the 7-day follow-up and a psychiatrist for the 30-day follow-up. This makes sure your child is seen post release when they may be at the most risk for relapse. If needed, your child can work through any issues in therapy on an outpatient basis. And he or she can see the psychiatrist to check his or her medications.

Get a jump on the crowd!

Schedule
your school
physical now!



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To schedule your sports physical, call 832-828-1005.
The Center for Children and Women locations:
 - 700 North Sam Houston Parkway West, Houston 77067
 - 9700 Bissonnet, Houston 77036

Find a list of all our providers under "Find a Doctor" at
TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org.