

KidsFirst



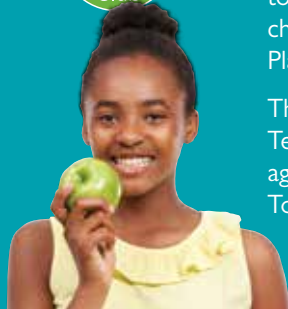
SEPTEMBER
2018

A PUBLICATION OF TEXAS CHILDREN'S HEALTH PLAN CHIP AND STAR MEMBERS AGES 13-18 AND THEIR PARENTS.

In this issue

MK-180XXX

- 2 Vaping: myths vs. facts
- 3 Beat stress with these breathing exercises
- 4 Study drugs don't make you smarter, but they can harm your health
- 4 Healthy blueberry smoothie



Keep Fit this fall!

Do you want to learn fun, easy ways to stay active and make smart food choices? Then Texas Children's Health Plan's Keep Fit Program is for you!

The Keep Fit Program is available to Texas Children's Health Plan members ages 10-18 with a BMI of 20+.

To learn more or sign up, call 832-828-1430 or visit TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/KeepFit.

The Keep Fit Program offers:

- Four health and fitness sessions
- Health coaching
- At home workout materials
- A quarterly newsletter

All at no cost to your family!

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Vaping: myths vs. facts

You've probably seen kids your age or even younger using Juuls, vape pens, and other e-cigarettes to vape. Vaping seems to be more and more popular with middle and high school kids because they think it tastes better and is safer than smoking regular cigarettes. But vaping can actually lead to serious health problems. There is a lot of false information out there about vaping and e-cigarettes, so here are the facts you should know.

Myth: Vape pens and e-cigarettes are safe to use.

Fact: Just like regular cigarettes, these devices use many toxic chemicals that can cause cancer. The liquid inside of them gets heated up, which adds more dangerous chemicals to what you're breathing in. The chemicals used to flavor the liquid are known to hurt your lungs – some of them can even melt plastic. If you swallow or spill vape or e-liquid on your skin, it can poison you in just a few minutes. Even the materials the holders are made out of, like nickel or tin, are not safe to breathe into your lungs. The smoke or vapor from a vape pen or e-cigarette can cause coughing and asthma problems.

Myth: Vaping is safer than smoking regular cigarettes.

Fact: You might think that vape pens or e-cigarettes don't have any nicotine in them, but many actually do. It is easy to get addicted to nicotine and you will be more likely to start smoking regular cigarettes if you start vaping. Even if vaping or e-cigarette liquid doesn't have nicotine in it, the chemicals used to make it taste like fruit, candy, or chocolate can harm your lungs.

Myth: Vaping will help me quit smoking.

Fact: You've probably heard that vaping helps you quit smoking. But that's not true. You're actually more likely to keep smoking cigarettes when you start vaping. If you want to stop smoking cigarettes, the best thing you can do is talk to your doctor about how to quit. You can also visit www.SmokeFree.gov or call 1-800-QUITNOW or 1-800-YESQUIT to find resources to help you or a parent stop smoking.

If you already vape using a pen or e-cigarette device, it's not too late to stop. Ask your doctor how you can quit today.

Harold J. Farber, MD, MSPH

Associate Medical Director, Texas Children's Health Plan

Source: AAP.org

Beat stress with these breathing exercises

Between school, friends, work, and family, it's normal to feel overwhelmed by everything that goes on in your life. But feeling stressed or anxious a lot can actually be hard on your body's health. Just like not drinking enough water can make you dehydrated, stress can leave you feeling tired and rundown. It can also make it easier for you to get sick.

One easy trick to beat stress is to focus on your breathing. It might sound silly because everyone breathes all day and night without thinking about it. But sometimes how you're feeling changes how you breathe. When you're stressed, your breathing becomes shallow and fast. To help yourself feel less worried, you can pay attention to breathing slowly and deeply. You'll start to feel better when you notice your body relaxing as your breathing becomes calmer.

If you start to feel stressed, try out these breathing exercises.

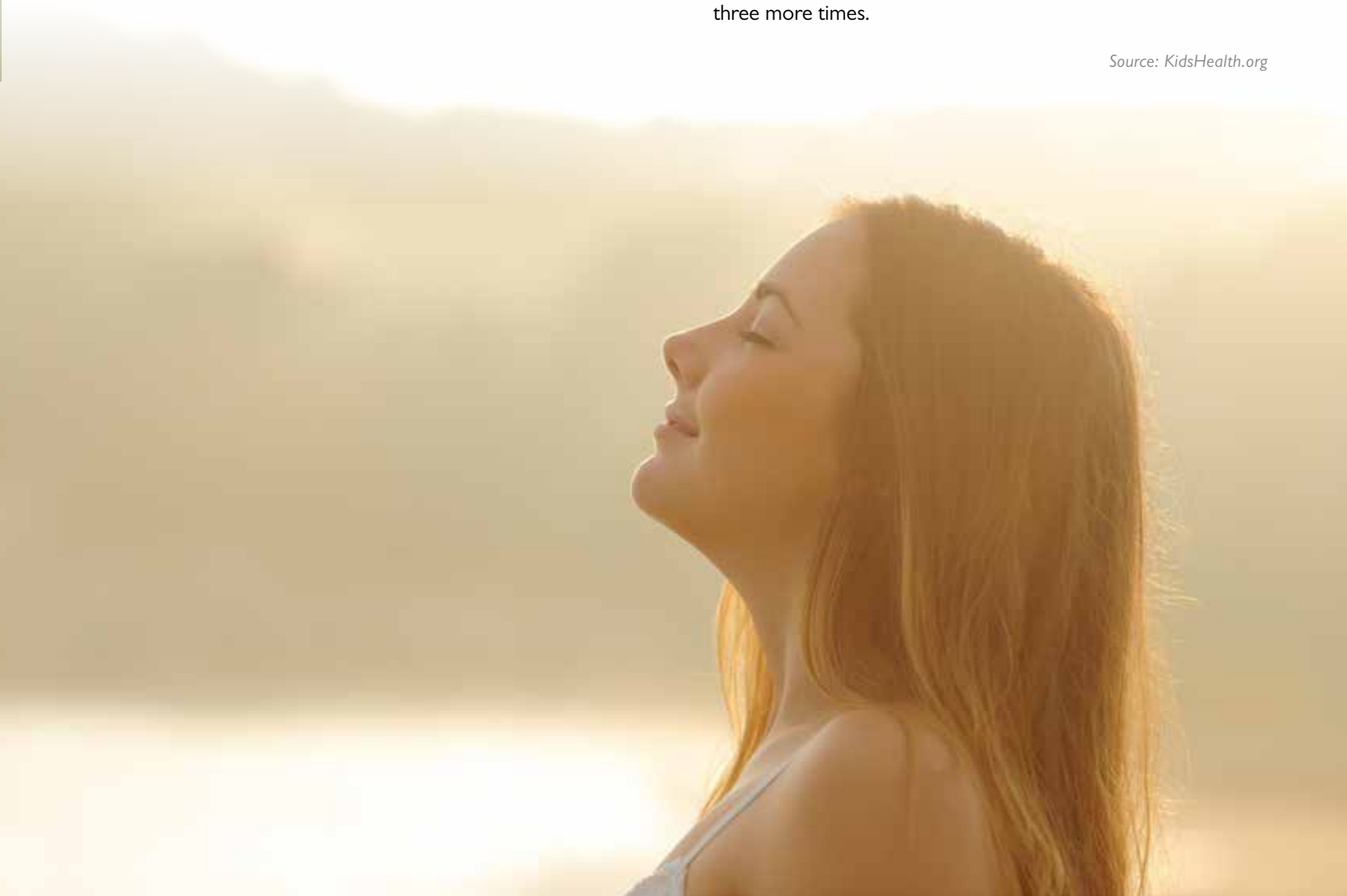
Belly breathing

- Sit comfortably with one hand on your belly.
- Close your mouth and relax your jaw. Breathe in through your nose and let your belly expand out against your hand. Imagine the lower part of your lungs filling up first, then the rest of your lungs filling up.
- Slowly breathe out. Imagine the air is leaving your lungs and let your belly go flat again.
- Do this 3 to 5 times.

Alternate nostril breathing

- Sit comfortably and place your right thumb on your right nostril.
- Slowly breathe in through your left nostril as you count to 5.
- Lift your thumb off of your right nostril and use your ring finger to close your left nostril. Breathe out through your right nostril as you count to 5. Then breathe in through your right nostril for 5 counts.
- Switch to putting your thumb over your right nostril again. Take your ring finger off your left nostril and repeat the process. Breathe out through your left nostril for 5 counts, then breathe in through your left nostril for 5 counts.
- Repeat this pattern (breathe out, breathe in, change sides) three more times.

Source: KidsHealth.org



Study drugs don't make you smarter, but they can harm your health

You may have heard of other kids taking prescription medicines like Adderall or Ritalin for conditions like ADHD. You may have also heard of or seen kids taking these medicines without a doctor's permission because they think the medicines will help them do better in school. These kids might be able to finish their homework more quickly or stay up late to study for a test. But it's important to know that "study drugs" like Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine, Vyvanse, and Concerta don't actually make you smarter or better at your school work.



Study drugs won't make you a better student, but they can have many negative side effects.

Why do study drugs make you feel like you can focus more?

Study drugs are part of a group of medicines called stimulants. These medicines increase energy, alertness, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure for a short time. You might feel more awake and alert for a few hours, but those feelings wear off quickly and leave you feeling sad, exhausted, and disconnected from your surroundings.

What do study drugs do to your body?

Taking too much of a stimulant can cause serious medical problems, including:

- High blood pressure
- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart failure
- Seizures
- Stroke

Taking study drugs can make you feel angry and paranoid for no reason. It can also cause heart problems and mental health issues. If you mix one of these stimulants with over-the-counter cold medicines, you have a higher chance of developing high blood pressure or irregular heartbeat.

Many people think these medicines can't harm your health, but study drugs can be addictive. If you use them too much, you can start to feel like you can't live without them. Trying to quit can cause withdrawal symptoms like depression, sleep problems, and fatigue.

Study drugs can hurt you much more than they can help you. If you need to focus more on your school work, you can try something different that won't impact your health. Getting more sleep, exercising, and eating healthy can all help you do better in school.

Healthy blueberry smoothie

What you need:

- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- ½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pinch cinnamon

What you do:

- Combine blueberries, yogurt, orange juice, vanilla extract, and cinnamon in a blender.
- Blend ingredients for 30 seconds on low speed.
- Increase speed to high and keep blending until smooth, about 2 minutes.
- Enjoy!

