



MARCH 2019

KidsFirst

A PUBLICATION FOR TEXAS CHILDREN'S HEALTH PLAN CHIP AND STAR MEMBERS AGES 7-12 AND THEIR PARENTS.



March is National Nutrition Month!

This month is dedicated to health awareness, which means helping your child make positive changes to their eating choices and physical activity. Making healthy choices as a kids will help your child live a happier, healthier life in the future! Look inside this issue for fun tips and recipes!

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Get up and go!

When it comes to making healthy choices, regular exercise and movement is just as important as eating healthy foods. Your child should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. That might sound like a lot, but there are three types of physical activity that can add up to one hour: aerobic, moderate, and routine.

Aerobic activity means any exercise that makes you breathe harder and speeds up your heart rate, like jogging, biking, dancing, swimming, or playing basketball. Try and include aerobic activities into your child's day at least three times per week.

Moderate activity is exercise that doesn't get your heart rate up as much as aerobic activity, but still gets you up and moving in a healthy way. Your child can walk the family dog, climb up and down stairs, bike on flat streets or paths, or hit a tennis ball back and forth with a friend.

Routine activity can include household chores like cleaning, taking out the trash, or walking to get the mail. You can also try parking in a far spot at the grocery store or the mall so that you and your child have a longer walk to the front entrance. Routine activities won't get you breathing hard like aerobic or moderate ones, but they are great ways to stay active on a regular basis.



Remember – your child's activities add up!

Your child doesn't have to fit 60 minutes a day in all at once to feel the benefits of getting and staying active. Encourage your child to choose several activities to do throughout the day and don't be afraid to change it up!

Source: NIDDK.NIH.gov

5 healthy snack hacks

Eating healthy doesn't mean giving up delicious snacks! Follow these easy tips to give your child's snacking style a healthy makeover.



Plan ahead – Portion your child's snacks into containers or baggies so they're ready to grab when you're on the go.

Build your own – Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts and add-ins like dried fruit, popcorn, seeds, or a small handful of chocolate chips.

Eat vibrant veggies – Add spice to your child's favorite raw vegetables with fun and tasty dips. Try pairing cucumbers, bell peppers, or carrots with hummus, guacamole, or non-fat dressing.

Make it a combo – Combine food groups for a satisfying snack. Think apple slices with peanut butter, whole-grain crackers with sliced turkey and avocado, or non-fat yogurt with fresh berries.

Snack on the go – Bring ready-to-eat snacks along with you when you and your child are away from home. Baby carrots, a banana, or yogurt (in a small cooler or insulated bag) are a few perfectly portable options.

Source: ChooseMyPlate.gov

Be active, stay healthy, Keep Fit!

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

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!

The Keep Fit Program is available to Texas Children's Health Plan members ages 10-18 with a BMI of 28+. To learn more or sign up, call 832-828-1580 or visit TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/KeepFit.



Help your child manage spring allergies

If your child is sniffing and sneezing for weeks but doesn't have a fever, she might have seasonal allergies. An allergy is the body's reaction to a specific substance, or allergen. Long-lasting sneezing with a stuffy or runny nose might be a condition called allergic rhinitis, which causes symptoms after you have an allergic reaction to something you breathe in and that lands on the lining inside the nose.

If your child has seasonal allergies, pay attention to pollen counts and try to keep your child inside when the levels are high. In the spring and summer, during the grass pollen season, pollen levels are highest in the evening. Some molds, another allergy trigger, may also be seasonal. Sunny, windy days can be especially tough for kids with a pollen allergy. It may also help to keep windows closed in your house and car and run the air conditioner.

For most children, allergy symptoms can be helped by avoiding allergens and using over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. Ask your child's doctor about which OTC medicine could help her allergy symptoms. Always keep in mind that even though some allergy medicines are approved for use in children as young as 6 months, the FDA warns that simply because a product's box says that it is intended for children does not mean it is intended for

children of all ages. Always read the label to make sure the product is right for your child's age. Be sure to ask your child's doctor before giving your child any OTC medicines.

If your child is avoiding allergens and taking OTC medicine, but is still having allergy symptoms, ask her doctor about what other treatment options are available, such as allergy shots.

For the latest information about managing children's allergies, please visit www.FDA.gov.

Source: [FDA.gov](https://www.FDA.gov)





Get ready. Get set. Draw!

Your child could be one of the winning artists of the Texas Children's Health Plan 2019 T-Shirt Design Contest! Break out the crayons, markers, or colored pencils and have your child draw what Texas Children's Health Plan means to your family. We'll pick 6 winners and their designs will be printed on a Texas Children's Health Plan T-shirt! The winners will each get a special prize and have their drawings published in our newsletters and on our website and social media. Even if we don't choose your child's design, we appreciate every member's art work and would love to see your child's drawing in next year's contest!

The design contest is open to all active Texas Children's Health Plan members from kindergarten to 5th grade. Drawings should be on white, unlined, letter-sized (8 ½ in. by 11 in.) paper. Make sure your child's drawing includes our name, Texas Children's Health Plan, in it. Don't forget to write your child's name, age, grade, and Texas Children's Health Plan Member ID number on each drawing! **The last day to enter the contest is April 15, 2019.** Each contest winner will be notified by May 31, 2019.

Here's how to submit your child's drawing:

1. **By mail:**
Texas Children's Health Plan
Member Engagement Department
P.O. Box 301011, WLS 8366
Houston, TX 77230-1011
2. **Drop-off locations:**
 - The Center for Children and Women – Greenspoint or Southwest
 - Participating Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston locations (drop off the drawing in a sealed envelope with your child's name written on it)

To learn more, visit texaschildrenshealthplan.org/tshirtcontest. **We can't wait to see your child's amazing art!**

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Subject to Official Rules available at www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/tshirtcontest. Void where prohibited by law. Open to active Texas Children's Health Plan members in K-5th grade. Contest starts on 1/1/19 and ends 4/15/19. Winners announced May 2019. Submitted entries will remain the property of Texas Children's Health Plan. All rights reserved.