



# KidsFirst

APRIL 2019

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

## Signing up for summer sports? Get your sports physical today!

Many summer sports teams and leagues require you to complete a sports physical with a doctor before you get on the court or the field. If you have had a Texas Health Steps (STAR) or well-child (CHIP) checkup in the last 12 months, then you qualify for a sports physical from your main doctor! All you have to do is call your doctor to schedule an appointment for a sports physical. No cost to your family!

If you have questions, you can call Member Services at 1-866-959-2555 (STAR) or 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP).



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- 2 The Cancer Vaccine
- 3 Cold sores: what you need to know
- 4 5 ways to get your 5-a-day
- 4 Spaghetti with chicken, tomato, and mushrooms

**Take a look inside!**

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# The Cancer Vaccine: Why your child should get the HPV shot

As a parent, you do everything you can to protect your children's health now and for the future. Today, we have a weapon to prevent several types of cancer in our kids: the HPV vaccine. The HPV vaccine is important because it protects against cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. HPV is a very common virus that is passed from one person to another during skin-to-skin sexual contact. Nearly 80 million people currently have it in the United States. About 14 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year.

Every year in the United States, HPV leads to 32,500 cancers in men and women. HPV vaccination can prevent most of these cancers from ever forming. The HPV vaccine offers the best protection to girls and boys who complete the series and have time to build up an immune response before they begin sexual activity with another person. This is not to say that your preteen is ready to

have sex. In fact, it's just the opposite—it's important to get your child protected before you or your child have to think about this issue. The immune response to this vaccine is better in preteens, and this could mean better protection for your child in the future.

**The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that boys and girls get the HPV shot (vaccine) at age 11 or 12.**

Children who are 11 or 12 years old should get 2 shots of HPV vaccine 6 to 12 months apart. Teens who get their two shots less than 5 months apart will require a 3rd dose of HPV vaccine. If your child is older than 14 years, 3 shots will need to be given over 6 months.

Ask your primary care provider (PCP) to protect your child against cancer by giving them the HPV shot as soon as possible. The most common side effects reported after HPV vaccination are mild, like pain and redness where the shot was given, fever, dizziness, and nausea. Bring up any questions or concerns you have about the vaccine so that you can learn and understand all of the facts about HPV and protecting your child from it.

*Dr. Lia Rodriguez, MD*

*Medical Director, Texas Children's Health Plan*

*Source: Immunize.org*



# Cold sores: what you need to know

## What are cold sores?

Cold sores are small painful blisters that can appear around the mouth, face, or nose. Cold sores (or fever blisters) are very common. They usually go away on their own within 1 to 2 weeks.

## What are the signs & symptoms of cold sores?

Cold sores first form blisters on the lips, around the mouth, and sometimes inside the mouth. The blisters then become sores, which can make eating painful. They're filled with fluid, but crust over and form a scab before they go away.

Sometimes the virus causes redness and swelling of the gums, fever, muscle aches, a generally ill feeling, and swollen neck glands.

After someone first gets HSV-1, the virus can lie quietly in the body without causing any symptoms. But it can wake up again later from things like:

- other infections
- a fever
- sunlight
- cold weather
- menstrual periods
- stress, like before a big test at school

When the virus reactivates, it can cause tingling and numbness around the mouth before blisters appear.

## What causes cold sores?

The herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) causes cold sores. This is a different virus from herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2). HSV-2 causes lesions in the genital area called genital herpes. Even though HSV-1 typically causes sores around the mouth and HSV-2 causes genital sores, these viruses can cause sores in either place.

## How do people get cold sores?

People can get HSV-1 by kissing or touching someone with cold sores, or by sharing eating utensils, towels, or other items with an infected person. Many people with HSV-1 got it as kids during their preschool years.



## How are cold sores treated?

Cold sores usually go away in about 1 to 2 weeks. No medicines can make the virus go away. But some treatments can help make cold sores less painful and not last as long:

- Cold compresses can help with discomfort.
- Prescription or over-the-counter treatments are sometimes recommended by the doctor.
- Cool foods and drinks can help make eating more comfortable.
- Taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen may ease pain. Don't take aspirin, as it's linked to a rare but serious illness called Reye syndrome.

## When should I call the doctor?

If you have a cold sore, it's important to see your doctor if:

- you have another health condition that has weakened your immune system
- the sores don't heal by themselves within 2 weeks
- you get cold sores often
- you have signs of a bacterial infection, such as fever, pus, or spreading redness

## Can cold sores be prevented?

The virus that causes cold sores is very contagious. To help prevent it from spreading to others:

- Keep your drinking glasses and eating utensils, as well as washcloths and towels, separate from those used by other family members and wash these items well after use.
- Don't kiss others until the sores heal.
- Wash your hands well and often, especially after touching a cold sore.
- Be especially careful not to touch your eyes. If HSV-1 gets into the eyes, it can cause a lot of damage.

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## 5 ways to get your 5-a-day

You may have heard that you should eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day – which works out to a total of about 2½ cups. But experts actually recommend getting even more than that amount.

There are no limits on the quantities of tasty fruits and veggies you can enjoy – unless, of course, you load ‘em up with butter or dressing, or deep-fry them! But many of us still find it hard to fit fruit and veggies into our meals.

Here are some ideas to help you get into the 5-a-day (or more!) habit:

1. Start with the first meal of the day. Plan to eat a serving or two of fruit with breakfast every day. Mix it up so you don't get bored. Half a grapefruit, an apple, or a handful of berries on your cereal are all good choices. Continue this pattern by eating vegetables at lunch and at dinner.
2. Get extra energy from fruit or vegetable snacks. The carbohydrates in fruit and vegetables are great sources of energy. Combine them with a serving of protein – such as a piece of cheese, a cup of yogurt, or a tablespoon of peanut butter, and you get staying power too. Ants on a log, anyone?

3. Double up on fruit and veggie servings. Recommended servings of fruit and veggies can be small. Unlike other foods, it's OK to double the serving size of fruit or vegetables. Serve yourself a 1-cup portion of broccoli or tomatoes instead of the standard serving of ½ cup.
4. Use fruit and vegetables as ingredients. Enjoy bread? Bake up a batch of zucchini bread and get your veggies along with your grains! Use applesauce instead of oil in your baked goods. Chop up veggies (peppers, carrots, celery) and toss them into your favorite chili recipe. If you don't like vegetables much, sneak them into foods you do enjoy (like grating carrots into tomato sauce or, again, zucchini into bread). It's a great way to get your veggies without having to taste them!
5. Try a new fruit, vegetable, or recipe each week. Our bodies like variety. So set a goal to try something different each week. You may find a new favorite. One good way to get variety is to eat the fruit and veggies that are in season in your area. They usually taste better than the bland fruit salad or shriveled apples you're used to seeing in the cafeteria.

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## Spaghetti with chicken, tomato, and mushrooms



### Ingredients

12 oz. whole-wheat spaghetti  
 12 oz. 99% fat-free boneless skinless chicken breasts  
 2 tbsp. olive oil  
 1 small onion, finely chopped  
 2 cups baby portabella mushrooms, rinsed  
 6 plum tomatoes, diced  
 Salt and pepper to taste (optional)  
 Fresh basil leaves (or ½ tbsp. dried basil)

### Directions

1. Cook the spaghetti and chicken according to their package instructions.
2. Drain the spaghetti and set aside. When cool, cut the chicken into bite-size pieces.
3. In the same pot the spaghetti was cooked in, heat the oil over medium heat and add the onion and mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions and mushrooms are soft.
4. Put the cooked pasta back into the pot with the onions and mushrooms.
5. Add the diced tomatoes and chicken.
6. Toss well and season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. To serve, place pasta on plates and top with basil.



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