



KidsFirst

JULY 2019

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



Get a jump start on your back-to-school physical!

Make sure you're healthy before heading back to school or starting a new sports season – visit your doctor for a physical this summer! Texas Children's Health Plan members who are 5 to 19 years old can get an annual school or sports physical at no cost to your family. Call your doctor's office and ask for a school or sports physical today!

For more information, you can call Texas Children's Health Plan Member Services at 1-866-959-2555 (STAR) or 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP).

Take a look inside!

- 2 Safe fun in the sun
- 3 4 tips for smart texting
- 4 Vaping: myths vs. facts
- 4 Healthy blueberry smoothie

P.O. Box 301011
Houston, TX 77230-1011



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1167
N. HOUSTON, TX

Safe fun in the sun

Summer is here and that means your family will be spending more time out in the sun. The sun's rays are extra strong during the summer, so it's very important to make sure your child's skin and eyes are protected from sun damage.

Too much exposure to the sun without protection can cause:

- Sunburns
- Skin damage, like wrinkles
- Eye damage, like cataracts (when the lens of your eye becomes cloudy)
- Skin cancer, like melanoma

Everyone needs sun protection, no matter how old you are or what your skin tone is. Even if your child's skin tone is dark, or if she easily gets a tan when she spends time in the sun, it's essential to protect her skin from the sun. Any tanning or burning causes skin damage, which could lead to skin cancer when your child gets older. Some people even develop skin cancer in their 20s.



Here's how to protect your child's skin and eyes from too much sun this summer:

- **Use sunscreen.** Doctors recommend that everyone should wear sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or higher, no matter what their skin tone is. Look for a sunscreen that's labeled "broad-spectrum" so that it protects your child from the two types of damaging sun rays. If she's going in the water, make sure you pick a sunscreen that is water-resistant. Apply the sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 15 minutes before your child goes out in the sun, then re-apply it every 2 hours OR after she gets out of the water.
- **Double-check your medicines.** Some medicines can make you more sensitive to the sun. Antibiotics, acne medicines, and psychiatric medicines can have this side effect. Check your child's prescription medicine labels or ask her doctor to learn if any medicines she is taking can make her more sensitive to the sun.
- **Avoid the strongest sun of the day.** The sun is strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., so you should try to keep your child in the shade during those hours. If she does go out in the sun, apply and re-apply sunscreen. Most sun damage happens when you're doing daily activities, so it's important to protect your child even if she isn't at the beach or going swimming.
- **Cover up.** Make sure your child's clothes aren't see-through so that they protect her from too much sun exposure. Have your child wear a hat when she spends time outside. If you're going to an outdoor event or the beach, try to take breaks from the sun under a wide umbrella or in a shady spot.
- **Wear sunglasses.** The sun can damage your eyes as well as your skin. When you buy sunglasses for your child, the price tag or a sticker will usually tell how much UV protection they give. You'll want to buy a pair with 100% UV protection for your child's eyes.

Did you know?

Even when the sky is cloudy, the sun's rays can still damage your skin. Protect your child every day, even when the sun is "invisible"!

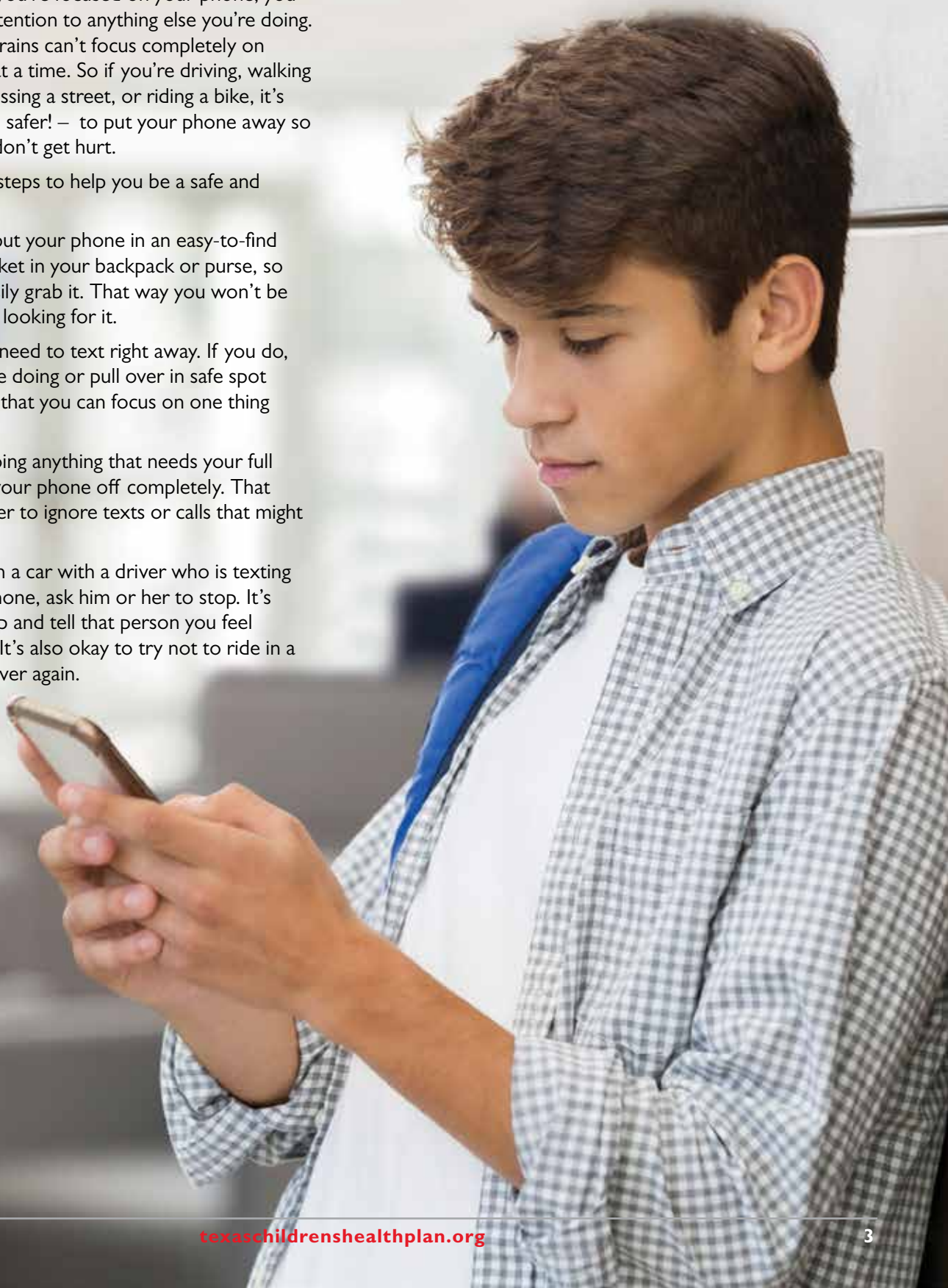
4 tips for smart texting

Texting can be a great way to stay in touch with family and friends, but it can also be a distraction that puts your safety at risk. When you're focused on your phone, you can't give your full attention to anything else you're doing. That's because our brains can't focus completely on more than one task at a time. So if you're driving, walking down a sidewalk, crossing a street, or riding a bike, it's always smarter – and safer! – to put your phone away so that you and others don't get hurt.

Here are some easy steps to help you be a safe and smart texter:

- Make sure you put your phone in an easy-to-find place, like a pocket in your backpack or purse, so that you can easily grab it. That way you won't be distracted while looking for it.
- Sometimes you need to text right away. If you do, stop what you're doing or pull over in safe spot while driving so that you can focus on one thing at a time.
- When you're doing anything that needs your full attention, turn your phone off completely. That will make it easier to ignore texts or calls that might distract you.
- If you're riding in a car with a driver who is texting or using their phone, ask him or her to stop. It's okay to speak up and tell that person you feel uncomfortable. It's also okay to try not to ride in a car with that driver again.

Source: KidsHealth.org



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 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

Healthy blueberry smoothie

Ingredients:

- ½ cup frozen unsweetened blueberries
- ½ medium banana, sliced
- ¾ cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- ¾ cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
(you can also use cow's milk or soy milk)
- 2 cups ice

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
2. Add a little water if the mixture doesn't blend easily.
3. Pour the smoothie into two glasses and enjoy!

