



# KidsFirst

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

## It's not too late to get the flu shot!

**The flu shot is a covered benefit for Texas Children's Health Plan members!** You can get the flu shot from your primary care provider (PCP). Texas Children's Health Plan members age 7 and older can also get a flu shot at their local pharmacy.

Protect your child with the flu shot today by visiting your local pharmacy or visit [texaschildrenshealthplan.org/flu](https://texaschildrenshealthplan.org/flu) to find a provider near you.



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# Start the new year off right with preventive care

Is one of your New Year's resolutions to help your children have a healthy 2020? Seeking preventive care is one of the best ways to make this happen!

Preventive care is important medical or dental care that supports your child's healthy development. One of the most important parts of preventive care is making sure your child visits your main doctor for regular checkups. By visiting your doctor regularly, you can identify problems and reduce the risk of illness before your child gets sick.

Kids who are 7 to 12 years old need to visit the doctor for a well-child checkup once a year. This visit is a checkup to make sure your child is healthy and developing normally. A well-child checkup is different from other visits to the doctor for illness or injury.



Well-child checkups give you an opportunity to ask questions about your child's development, behavior, and overall well-being. You can also use these checkups to schedule routine vaccinations (shots).

Preventive care is the best way to give your child a healthy start to the new year! If you need help scheduling a well-child checkup, call **1-866-959-2555 (STAR)** or **1-866-959-6555 (CHIP)**.

## Is it a cold or the flu?

Your child has a sore throat, cough, and high fever. Could it be the flu? Or just a cold?

The flu usually makes kids feel worse than if they have a cold. But it's not always easy to tell the difference between the two. Here are tips on what to look for — and what to do.

### Cold or Flu Symptoms Guide

Answer these questions to see if your child has the flu or a cold:

Question	Flu	Cold
Did the illness come on suddenly?	Yes	No
Does your child have a high fever?	Yes	No
Is your child's energy level very low?	Yes	No
Is your child's head achy?	Yes	No
Is your child's appetite less than normal?	Yes	No
Are your child's muscles achy?	Yes	No
Does your child have chills?	Yes	No

### When should I call the doctor?

If you have any doubts, it's best to call the doctor. An illness that seems like a cold can turn out to be the flu. And other illnesses, like strep throat or pneumonia, can seem like the flu. Even doctors sometimes need to do a test to know for sure if a child has the flu or a cold.

It's important to get medical care right away if your child:

- seems to be getting worse
- has trouble breathing
- has a high fever
- has a bad headache
- has a sore throat
- seems confused

### How is the flu treated?

Most of the time, you can care for your child at home with plenty of liquids, rest, and comfort. Even healthy children can struggle with the flu. But some kids — like those younger than 5 or kids with asthma — are more likely to have problems if they get the flu. In some cases, a doctor might prescribe an antiviral medicine to lessen flu symptoms.

### What can parents do?

- Prevention is the best medicine. Make sure that everyone in your family gets a flu vaccine every year.
- Teach your kids good hand washing habits to help stop the spread of flu.
- If your child has asthma or another illness, call your doctor right away if your child shows signs of the flu. The doctor might need to give your child antiviral medicines, which only work when children start taking them within 48 hours of when flu symptoms start.

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# Well-child checkups: what to expect

## At the Doctor's Office

Regular well-child exams are an important part of keeping kids healthy and up to date on immunizations against many serious childhood diseases.

Checkups also are a chance for you and the doctor to talk about developmental and safety issues, and for you to get answers to any questions about your child's overall health. As kids grow, they can also ask their own questions about their health and changing body.

At yearly exams, kids are weighed and measured, and their results are plotted on growth charts for weight, height, and body mass index (BMI). Using these charts, doctors can see how kids are growing compared with other kids the same age and gender. The doctor will take a medical and family history and do a physical exam.

During the visit, your child's blood pressure, vision, and hearing will be checked. Your child may be screened for anemia, tuberculosis, or high cholesterol.

Immunizations given might include:

- tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis booster (Tdap)
- first HPV vaccine
- first meningococcal vaccine

The flu vaccine, given before flu season each year, also is recommended.

The doctor might also ask about your child's sleep, exercise, and eating habits. A yearly exam also lets older kids talk with their doctors about any questions they have about puberty.

The doctor also might talk with your child about the importance of personal care and hygiene; warn against using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs; and stress safety (wearing a bicycle helmet, using seatbelts, etc.).

The doctor also may ask about and provide counseling on behavioral issues, learning problems, difficulties at school, and other concerns.

As your child becomes a teen, the doctor may ask you to leave the room to allow a more private conversation. It's an important part of kids moving toward independence and taking responsibility for their own health.

## If You Suspect a Medical Problem

Parents usually can judge if their child is sick enough for a visit to the doctor. Some symptoms that may require a doctor's attention include:

- changes in weight or eating habits
- changes in behavior or sleep patterns
- failure to progress in height or pubertal development as expected
- menstrual problems
- a fever and looking sick
- frequent, long-lasting vomiting or diarrhea
- signs of a skin infection or an unusual or lasting rash
- stubborn cough, wheezing, or other breathing problems
- localized pain

## Common Medical Problems

Common problems found in this age group include sleep disorders, bedwetting, strep throat, and colds. Some preteens also may be injured playing sports or other activities, and some kids develop stress-related stomachaches or headaches.

These are rarely serious, but if a problem persists, call your doctor.

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# Winter health and safety tips

Winter is here, which means cold weather can create dangerous conditions for kids. Use these tips to help your child stay warm and safe this winter!

## What to wear

- Dress your child warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget warm boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- Always dress your child in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same weather.
- Blankets, quilts, pillows, and other loose bedding should be kept out of a baby's sleeping environment because they can cause smothering deaths.
- If a blanket is used to keep a sleeping baby warm, it should be thin and tucked under the crib mattress. The bedding should only reach as far as the baby's chest, so his or her face is less likely to become covered.



## Winter health

- If your child has winter nosebleeds, try using a humidifier in his or her room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum jelly may help keep the nose moist.
- Viruses that cause colds and the flu are more common in the winter. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into his or her elbow may help prevent the spread of the flu.
- Children 6 months of age and older should get the flu shot to reduce their risk of catching the flu. It's not too late to get one from your primary care provider (PCP) or at your local pharmacy!

# Super spinach pie

## Ingredients:

- 3 large eggs
- 2 egg whites
- ½ cup skim milk
- ¾ cup part-skim mozzarella
- 1 cup chopped fresh or frozen spinach (if frozen, thaw and drain well)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 (9-inch) deep dish frozen pie shell

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (176°C).
2. In a large bowl, combine eggs, egg whites, skim milk, mozzarella, spinach, salt, and pepper. Stir until well combined.
3. Pour mixture into pie shell and bake for 40–45 minutes or until pie is set and crust is golden brown.
4. Slice and serve hot, at room temperature, or even cold.

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