

SuperStars

A publication for
Texas Children's Health
Plan STAR Kids Members

TEXAS
STAR Kids
Your Health Plan ★ Your Choice



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

SPRING 2018

In this ISSUE

- 2 What is a Texas Health Steps checkup?
- 3 Spring sports for all!
- 4 It's time to sign up for summer overnight camps
- 5 Smoking harms your family
- 6 Earth Day

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May is National Mental Health Month

Do you care for a child or adolescent living with mental illness?

We know it can be tough to find the right resources and support. National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) Greater Houston now offers NAMI Basics, a new education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. Topics include:

- Current information and research on mental illness and treatment
- Problem solving, listening, and communication skills
- Crisis management
- Locating appropriate community support

The course is taught by trained teachers who are parents/caregivers of kids ages 0-18 who show signs and symptoms of mental illness. To learn more about NAMI Basics, go to namigreaterhouston.org/classes/nami-basics or call Program Coordinator Victory Evans at 713-970-4435, M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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What is a Texas Health Steps checkup?

This is a question I often hear from parents of children in the STAR Kids program. I always tell them that a Texas Health Steps check-up is actually a very important kind of doctor visit.

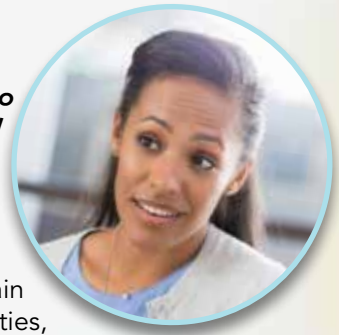
State and national experts have determined that Texas Health Steps checkups are necessary at certain ages to make sure health goals are on track. Taking into consideration your child's medical complexities, your doctor or provider will do a head-to-toe exam to make sure your child is doing well for her age. Certain tests, like blood pressure or lab tests, are required to screen for health problems. You should also expect to get important advice on how to support your child's growth, development, and safety.

A Texas Health Steps checkup can also be your time to ask questions and get answers when your child is not sick. This type of appointment is longer than a normal visit, so you and your doctor or provider will have enough time to discuss how your child is doing and what health goals you can work on together.

You can call Texas Children's Health Plan STAR Kids Member Services at 1-800-659-5764 or visit MyChildrensMedicaid.org/content/texas-health-steps-medical-checkups to find out more information about checking off your child's next Texas Health Steps checkup!

Carl Tapia, MD
Medical Director, STAR Kids
Texas Children's Health Plan

"My child is always at the doctor's office, so why do we need a Texas Health Steps checkup?"



The importance of childhood vaccinations: A Mom's Perspective

I did not fully grasp how important it was to be vaccinated until I had my daughter in April 2014. During my pregnancy, the baby was diagnosed with a severe congenital heart defect. Juliana was born in heart failure four weeks early at Texas Children's Pavilion for Women. She was not a candidate for surgery and was quickly put on the heart transplant list. A miracle happened five days after Juliana was listed for transplant – she received a new heart at only 17 days old and is the youngest heart transplant recipient born at Texas Children's.

Because Juliana is a heart transplant recipient, she must take immunosuppressive medications for the rest of her life. She is also on a strict vaccination schedule and cannot have live vaccines, including the MMR and chickenpox vaccines. Therefore, Juliana is only protected by immunized people in her community, also known as herd immunity. The more people in our community that are vaccinated, the safer Juliana is from contracting a potentially life-threatening disease. With the recent outbreaks of flu and measles in Texas, we are thankful that the people in our community realize the importance of herd immunity to protect fragile children like Juliana. We are committed to taking the best care of her life gift and being vaccinated is a priority for us and our family!

Riki Graves, MHA

To learn more about when your child should receive vaccinations, visit:
CDC.gov/vaccines/parents/protecting-children/index.html



Spring sports for all!

Did you know? Texas Children's Health Plan offers sports team fee assistance to all STAR Kids members ages 5-21! We take care of the cost of enrollment and access to any sports/physical activity available to your child, up to \$100 per year per member. To learn more, call STAR Kids Member Services at 1-800-659-5764.

Check out these great spring sports programs in your area!



Adaptive Sports for Kids in Jefferson and Surrounding Counties

Adaptive Sports for Kids (A.S.K.) is a non-profit organization whose goal is to give children and young adults with special needs the opportunity to play sports they may not otherwise be able to play, all at no cost to them. Each child is partnered with a "buddy" volunteer who will help their player with whatever they need, whether it's batting, running, pushing their wheelchair, or just playing in the dirt with them. This way all of our parents can sit down, relax, and watch their child play sports. If you would prefer to be your child's buddy, that is okay too! **A.S.K. is located at Doornbos Heritage Park in Nederland.** For more information, visit www.AdaptiveSportsForKids.org.

YMCA Miracle League

The YMCA Miracle League program provides children and adults with physical limitations and other special needs the opportunity to play baseball in a safe, fun atmosphere. One of the main barriers for these children is the natural grass field used in conventional youth leagues. The Miracle League plays on a custom-designed, rubberized turf field that accommodates wheelchairs and other devices while helping to prevent injuries. **The YMCA Miracle League program is offered at: Baytown, Huntsville, Lake Houston, and Langham Creek Family YMCAs.** For more information, visit www.YMCAHouston.org or call 713-659-5566.

The Baseball Little League Challenger Program: Baseball for Kids with Disabilities

The Little League® Challenger Program was founded in 1989, and is Little League's adaptive baseball program for individuals with physical and intellectual challenges. Any individual with a physical or intellectual challenge may participate. If an individual can participate in the traditional Little League Baseball or Softball program with reasonable accommodations, they should do so. The Little League Challenger Division accommodates players ages 4-18; or up to age 22 if still enrolled in school. "Buddies" are individuals who assist Challenger athletes in the areas of batting, base running and defense, but only as needed. Typically, games are 1-2 innings long and last about an hour. All players play defensively and bat every inning.

Challenger Divisions play in the Harris, Jefferson, and Northeast Medicaid Rural Service Areas! To find a Challenger Division near your community, visit our League Finder on the Little League website www.littleleague.org/play-little-league/challenger/about-challenger/ or email us at challenger@LittleLeague.org.

The Miracle League of East Texas

The Miracle League of East Texas removes the barriers that keep children with mental and physical disabilities off the baseball field and lets them experience the joy of America's favorite pastime. Since the main barriers for these children arise from the natural grass fields used in conventional youth leagues, Miracle League teams play on a custom-designed, rubberized turf field that accommodates wheelchairs and other assistive devices while helping to prevent injuries. To help the athletes, the Miracle League uses a "buddy" system – pairing each player with an able-bodied peer. **The Miracle League of East Texas is based in Longview.** For more information, visit MiracleLeagueOfEastTexas.com.





Try these exercises 10 times each, 3 times a day.

- Walk heel to toes by positioning your heel just in front of the toes of your opposite foot each time you take a step. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.
- In a wheelchair, raise your toes and forefeet as high as you can, keeping your heels on the ground. Then raise your heels as high as you can, keeping your toes on the ground.
- Gently lean over to your right side, lifting your left arm over your head and letting your right arm move toward the floor. Repeat on your left side.

Source: healthmattersprogram.org

It's time to sign up for summer overnight camps!

Spring is the time of year to start looking for summer activities for your child.

Many summer activities, such as summer overnight camps and local day camps, post their registration in February for parents to complete. Registration includes the required Physician Report that must be completed by your pediatrician. Most summer overnight camps fill up by the end of April, so sign up now before it's too late!

Here are a few great options of summer overnight camps for kids with disabilities:

- **Children's Association for Maximum Potential (CAMP)** – Center Point, TX (northwest of San Antonio) www.campcamp.org
- **Texas Lions Camp** – Center Point, TX (northwest of San Antonio) www.lionscamp.com
- **Camp Summit** – Fort Worth, TX area www.campsummittx.org
- **Camp for All** – Brenham, TX www.campforall.org
- **Camp Blessings** – Magnolia, TX www.campblessing.org
- **Camp Heyday, ARC of Smith County** – Tyler, TX www.arcofsmithcounty.com/programs/camp-heyday

The Texas Department of State Health Services' Children with Special Health Care Needs program also provides a list of summer camps. For more information, go to <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/CSHCN/pdf/2018-List-of-Summer-Camps.pdf>.

For more information on sending your child to summer camp, go to www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/family-support/sending-your-child-to-camp



Southern Salad

Ingredients:

1/2 cup onions, chopped
1 pound lean ground turkey
1 tablespoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 cup canned kidney beans, drained
1 15-ounce can of chickpeas
1 medium tomato, diced
2 cups lettuce
1/2 cup cheddar cheese



If your child is very selective with food or have eating difficulties, make sure to include food sources of vitamins A and C, zinc, iron, and calcium regularly into her diet. These are found in a variety of foods like fruits, green leafy vegetables, legumes, whole grains, yogurt, eggs, fish, vegetables, and nuts.

1. Cook ground meat and onions in a large skillet until the meat is no longer pink. Drain.
2. Stir chili powder, oregano, and cumin into meat mixture; cook for 1 minute.
3. Add beans, chickpeas, and tomatoes. Mix gently to combine.
4. Combine lettuce and cheese in large serving bowl.
5. Portion lettuce and cheese onto 4 plates.
6. Add 1 cup of meat mixture on top of each serving of lettuce and cheese.

Note: This recipe can be modified by using spinach or kale instead of lettuce, and black beans instead of kidney beans.

Source: www.cnpp.usda.gov

Smoking harms your family – here's how to quit

Smoking does not just hurt the smoker – it hurts everyone close to the smoker. This is especially true if you have a child with medical complexities. Being around secondhand smoke can make their medical conditions worse. If you're a smoker, the best way to help your child live a healthier life is to quit smoking.

There are two ways to stop smoking:

- You can quit "cold turkey," which means stopping the habit immediately and without any medicines. If you decide to quit this way, you can get support by phone from the American Cancer Institute at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-YES-QUIT, or online from the National Cancer Institute at www.smokefree.gov
- You can also use medicines to help you stop smoking. These medicines help you to feel more comfortable when not using tobacco. For most people, this is the easier path. These medicines include the over the counter nicotine patch, gum, or lozenge, or prescription medications like Chantix. Cigarettes are designed to keep you hooked. The reason the nicotine patch or gum works is that the nicotine is released slowly. This lets your brain gradually get used to not having nicotine.

E-cigarettes are not a replacement for quitting smoking altogether. The vapors from the e-cigarette are not safe to inhale or to exhale around your child.

Harold Farber, MD, MPSH
Associate Medical Director
Texas Children's Health Plan

If your child is a Texas Children's Health Plan member, Texas Children's Health Plan can help you stop smoking. You can receive counseling and nicotine replacement medicines at no cost to you. You can ask your child's doctor for a referral to the Texas Children's Health Plan Care Management program.

Quitting smoking now is the best thing you can do for yourself and your child. Texas Children's Health Plan is here for your child – and for you!



EARTH DAY is Sunday, April 22

Earth Day is about honoring the planet and all living things on it, especially plants and animals. A great way to observe Earth Day with your family is to support your local farmers' market. A farmers' market is an outdoor market where people sell homegrown fruits and vegetables, homemade food items, handmade goods, and more. It's a fun place for your community to gather, and the perfect place to pick up fresh food and produce for your family!

Check out these farmers' markets in your area:

HARRIS SERVICE AREA

Fulshear Farmers' Market

When: Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Where: FM 1093 at Bois d'Arc, Fulshear

Locavore Farmers' Market

When: Every third Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Where: Lakewood UMC Church
11330 Louetta, Spring

Peach Street Farmers' Market

When: Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Where: 227 S. Chenango, Angleton



JEFFERSON SERVICE AREA

Baytown Farmers' Market

When: Every third Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

(call 281-420-6597 to confirm market opening day)

Where: 213 W. Texas Avenue, Baytown

Beaumont Farmers' Market

When: Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Where: Beaumont Athletic Complex 950 Langham Road,
Beaumont

Huntsville Downtown Farmers' Market

When: Saturdays 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

(call 936-291-5920 to confirm market opening day)

Where: University Avenue between 11th and 12th Street,
Huntsville

NORTHEAST SERVICE AREA

Tyler Farmers' Market

When: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Broadway Square Mall parking lot 4850 Old Bullard Road, Tyler

Lindale Farmers' Market

When: Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

(call 903-752-9774 to confirm market opening day)

Where: Hwy 69 & Valley Street, Lindale

(location subject to change – call 903-752-9774 to confirm)

Rusk County Farmers' Market

When: Tuesdays and Saturdays, 7 a.m. until sold out

(call 903-863-5691 to confirm market opening day)

Where: Henderson Activities Center parking lot at
Fair Park and South High, Henderson

