



# WHOLE you



2023 Winter Bulletin

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## Welcome!

As we once again enter into a new year, welcome to another edition of Whole You, a newsletter from Sunshine Health.

We have plenty of helpful tips to start the new year strong. You'll learn more about key information you can share with your child about healthy alternatives to their favorite snacks and why wellness visits are so important.

In case you missed it, check out our [Fall 2022 issue \(PDF\)](#) for great articles that can help in kickstarting your child's 2023 health journey. We hope you enjoy this edition and that it helps you take better care of your whole child this new year!

# Stay Well with Wellness Visits

*In the past, people only went to the doctor when they felt sick. But over time, we have learned that even if you seem healthy, it doesn't mean that you are. Catching illnesses early means better health outcomes. That's why preventive care, like shots, screenings and regular visits to your child's doctor are key parts of their healthcare.*

**Yearly checkups, often called wellness visits, allow doctors to keep a close eye on your child's health.**

They can catch diseases sooner, which gives more time for treatment and can reduce the cost of your child's care. These visits also allow the doctor to check on your child's overall health, like their growth, medications, lifestyle and vaccines.

As a parent, you can use these appointments to ask questions, raise concerns and learn more about how to care for your child's health. The visits give you and your child a chance to get to know their doctor, which can help them get to know your child better.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR CHILD'S NEXT CHECKUP:

- *Is my child due for any vaccines?*
- *Are there any screenings you think my child should get?*
- *Does my child's family history put them at risk for any illnesses?*
- *Are there lifestyle changes my child should make?*
- *Does my child need any changes to their prescriptions?*
- *Can you explain my child's test results?*
- *Are the symptoms my child is experiencing normal?*
- *Does my child need a specialist? And will they need a referral?*
- *Will my child need a follow-up visit?*
- *How often should my child visit the doctor?*

Sources:  
[The Importance of Regular Check-Ups](#)  
[Five reasons why you should get an annual checkup | UT Physicians](#)  
[5 Reasons Why Annual Physical Exams Are Important - Virtua Primary Care, NJ](#)

[5 Questions to Ask Your Physician at an Annual Physical Exam](#)  
[Top 9 Questions to Ask at Your Annual Physical Exam | Oak Street Health](#)  
[10 Questions To Ask At Your Yearly Physical](#)

# Healthy Dental Habits For Your Child

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, more than 50 percent of children will be affected by tooth decay before age five. Helping your child form good dental habits early will set them up to have healthy teeth for life.

Remember, even with good at-home dental care, it's still important that your child sees the dentist. The dentist can assess your child's teeth and give your child more tips for taking care of their teeth.

Dentists can also apply sealants, or thin plastic coatings for teeth, to lessen your child's chance of cavities. Sealants fill in the grooves in your child's back teeth to keep bacteria out.

Call your child's dentist to schedule a checkup. For now, here are some tips for dental care at home:



## **BRUSH**

Make sure your child brushes their teeth at least twice a day. They should use a soft bristled toothbrush and replace it every three or four months.



## **USE FLUORIDE**

Using fluoride toothpaste will help protect your child's teeth from cavities. They should use a pea sized amount.



## **LIMIT SUGAR**

Try to cut down on your child's sugary snacks and drinks. These foods fuel bacteria growth.



## **FLOSS**

Remind your child to floss every day to remove food and bacteria from in between their teeth. Help them if they need it.

# Before Diving In, Put Swimming Safety First

*In Florida, it's always swimming season!*

**May is National Water Safety Month, and as spring break approaches, more families are flocking to beaches and pools.**

*While your child splashes the day away, keep these tips in mind:*



## **KEEP AN EYE OUT:**

Make sure to pay close attention to your child when they are in or near water. If you aren't swimming with them, you should still be able to see and hear them to be able to help them, if needed.

## **FLOATIES:**

If your child can't swim, make sure they are wearing a lifejacket or floaties that are U.S. Coast Guard approved. It's important that floatation devices fit properly, so check the size and weight limit.

## **SWIMMING LESSONS:**

Learning to swim and practicing safe behavior is a critical first step for your child. Even if your child can swim, lessons can help them learn more about water safety, and with Sunshine Health, your child may qualify for up to \$200\* in swimming lessons. Visit [SunshineHealth/CW](https://SunshineHealth.com/CW) for more information.

## **CLEAN AND CLEAR:**

Wherever you are, check to make sure water is clean and clear of hazards before letting your child swim. This is especially important in open water, like lakes and rivers and at the beach. If the water in a pool is not clean, it's best to find another place for your child to swim.

*\*Prior authorization required. Contact Member Services with questions.*

# Switching it Up: Tips for Healthier Snacking

There are delicious snacks and meals that your child would do anything to get their hands on. However, the food children crave can be unhealthy. It's thought that around 50 percent of people experience unhealthy cravings, which can quickly derail any health journey.

Luckily, there are many healthier options that can feel just as indulgent as your child's favorite junk food. Fresh fruit is considered nature's candy and dark chocolate is actual candy that is a great source of antioxidants.

There are ways to substitute junk foods for delicious and healthier alternatives. Here are some good snacks you can offer the next time your child is craving a candy bar.

## **Healthier Snacks:**

- Fresh Fruit
- Greek Yogurt
- Dark Chocolate
- Plantain Chips
- Trail Mix
- Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat
- Hummus With Vegetables
- Sweet Potato Fries
- Baked Tortilla Chips
- Cottage Cheese

### Sources:

[The Scientific Reason Why We Crave Unhealthy Foods](#)  
[Here's the Deal With Your Junk Food Cravings](#)  
[18 Healthy Foods to Eat When Cravings Strike](#)  
[29 Healthy Snacks That Can Help You Lose Weight](#)  
[Serotonin: What Is It, Function & Levels.](#)



# Stay Safe with Safe-Sex Tips

Educating your child about sex can help them avoid some risks and life-altering consequences. Here are some helpful tips to share with your child if they are sexually active:

**TALK FIRST:** Before your child engages in sexual activity, highlight the importance of knowing their partner's sexual histories. Be sure to establish the importance of setting boundaries. Always make sure your child can talk to their doctor about any sexual health concerns.

**USE CONDOMS:** Each time your child has sex, they should use a condom. It can protect them from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and help to prevent pregnancy. Condoms are widely available, hormone-free, come in male and female varieties and can easily be carried. Just make sure they get the right condom for them as improper sizes can lead to condoms failing and materials like latex can cause issues for those who are allergic.

**AVOID SUBSTANCES:** Before engaging in sex, your child should avoid using drugs or alcohol. These substances can alter their state of mind and might lead them to participate in higher-risk sex or being unable to properly communicate consent to their partner.

**CONTRACEPTIVES:** Along with a condom, there are other ways to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Women can take oral contraceptive pills, use an intrauterine device (IUD), a hormonal implant or injection or an emergency contraceptive pill. Talk to your doctor about what's best for your child.

**SEX MYTHS:** Educating your child about sex is the best way to ensure they are having safe sex. Some common myths are that condoms protect against all STDs and that the pull-out method won't get a woman pregnant. Although very effective, condoms do not work 100% of the time against all diseases, and the pull-out method is not an approved form of birth control. All men secrete fluid during sex and studies have shown that these fluids do contain active sperm. Make sure your child stays informed on best practices so that they can be wary of other false sex myths.

If you have questions about when or how to talk to your child about sex, reach out to their doctor



Sources:  
[9 types of contraception you can use to prevent pregnancy \(with pictures!\) | Queensland Health](#)  
[Contraception and Preventing Pregnancy | HHS Office of Population Affairs](#)  
[Safer Sex \("Safe Sex"\) | Reduce Your Risk of Getting STDs](#)  
[Top Ten Safer Sex Tips - Our Bodies Ourselves](#)  
[Safer Sex Guidelines | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)  
[Six Common Myths About Safe Sex | LeBauer Healthcare](#)

# Managing Your Child's Diabetes in Daily Life

*Diabetes can be a lot to keep up with, and your child's life is bound to change if they are diagnosed.*

Although it may seem overwhelming at first, managing your child's diabetes gets easier with time and education. Here are a few changes you can make to your child manage this condition in their daily life.

## 1 MAKE THEIR PLATE A GARDEN

Filling your child's plate with fruit and veggies at every meal introduces their palate to unique nutrients and vitamins. Take this opportunity to have your child try new produce to keep things fun!



## 2 SMART ALTERNATIVES

When your child's diet has to change, focus on what they can have with easy substitutions. Olive and avocado oils for butter. Whole-wheat pasta and bread for white. Beef jerky and nuts for potato and tortilla chips. Fish for beef. Sparkling or flavored water over soda and juice. These simple swaps make a huge impact on your child over time.

## 3 STAY ACTIVE

Children who exercise have lower glucose levels and are able to process sugar better than those who only take a diabetes drug. Talk to your child's doctor or care manager about the right exercise plan for your child.

## 4 ALWAYS BE PREPARED

When managing your child's diabetes, it's important that you stay organized as well. Write out weekly menus. Make shopping lists. Put time on the calendar for exercise that you and your child can do together. Schedule an annual doctor visit and diabetes testing for your child. By planning ahead, time crunches and daily stress won't derail you or your child's health.

## 5 REGULAR DOCTOR VISITS

Regular visits with your child's doctor can help make sure they are regularly getting their labs checked for their diabetes. Regular eye exams are important to check for vision changes in your child.

# Caregiver Tools

Children in the child welfare system may have complex medical and behavioral health needs. We understand that this can be a lot on you, the caregiver. Luckily, Sunshine Health has tools that can help you reduce your stress.



## CAREGIVER ONLINE PORTAL

Allows a caregiver to view claims, health alerts, contact a nurse and case manager, send a secure message to the plan, print a temporary ID card, view caregiving program materials, community resources and more. To create a member or caregiver account, follow the steps below or ask your care coordinator for assistance.

- [Login](#).
- Select I am a Caregiver.
- Click Submit.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Our [Community Resource Database](#) connects caregivers with local programs and supports. These programs provide help with food, shelter, healthcare, money and education, jobs and more. Sign up now for these free tools and features. Or call the Community Connections Help Line at **1-866-775-2192**.



## KEEP A JOURNAL

Sunshine Health offers a Caregiver Journal to organize basic medical and legal information as well as your child's emergency plan and additional caregiver resources. The Caregiver Journal can be found in the Caregiver Online Portal.



We care about you and your overall health as a caregiver! Call Member Services toll-free at **1-855-463-4100** (TTY 1-800-955-8770). We are here for you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern.





Sunshine Health provides free aids and services to people with disabilities, such as qualified sign language interpreters, written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic and other formats), and free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.

This information is available for free in other languages. Please contact Member Services at 1-855-463-4100, TTY 1-800-955-8770 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Esta información está disponible en otros idiomas de manera gratuita. Comuníquese con nuestro número de servicio al cliente al 1-855-463-4100, TTY 1-800-955-8770 de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 8 p.m.

Si oumenm, oubyen yon moun w ap ede, gen kesyon nou ta renmen poze sou Sunshine Health, ou gen tout dwa pou w jwenn èd ak enfòmasyon nan lang manman w san sa pa koute w anyen. Pou w pale avèk yon entèprèt, sonnen nimewo 1-855-463-4100 (TTY 1-800-955-8770).

Nếu quý vị, hay người mà quý vị đang giúp đỡ, có câu hỏi về Sunshine Health, quý vị sẽ có quyền được giúp và có thêm thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ của mình miễn phí. Để nói chuyện với một thông dịch viên, xin gọi 1-855-463-4100 (TTY 1-800-955-8770).