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NAT NEWS



Upcoming Events

August 20th, Dr Um and Dr Prytula received news that they passed the pharmaceutical prescribing exam! Congratulations Doctors!

Second edition of My Health Navigator: The Road To Change is available to download on our website!

Dr Um and Dr Prytula will be training Doctors in IV therapeutics in Mexico City (October 15 – 18th 2015). They will also be teaching emergency procedures courses in Calgary (November 28-29th, 2015).

Tips for a Successful School Year

As a new school year begins, it can often be challenging to find balance between the hectic schedule and a healthy lifestyle. Ensuring both children and parents eat nutritious meals while rushing to catch the school bus, make it to work on time, or attending after-school activities may be a daunting task. Whether your child is entering kindergarten, high school, or post-secondary schooling, each year is a new experience and being prepared for a fresh study routine is an important step that requires teamwork from the whole family. Here are some tips for a **Successful School Year**.

1. **Breakfast is still the most important meal of the day.** Not only are you “breaking the fast,” but you are fueling the body and the brain for the full day ahead. A healthy breakfast contributes to proper growth, brain development, energy, and alertness, all of which are essential for a successful day at school (or work). Skipping meals may lead to physical, intellectual, and behavioural problems. It also decreases normal metabolism and encourages overeating in meals and snacks later in the day. In order to nourish the body and brain, keep the immune



To prevent illness and the spread of germs:

- wash hands with soap for at least 15 seconds before and after eating
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing
- Don't share hats to prevent the spread of lice

system strong, and improve memory, it is important to establish healthy eating habits throughout the day. (*Please refer to Healthy Lunch Tips*).

2. **Rest and Restore.** Being well rested is crucial for proper brain function and energy levels throughout the day. Without a good night's sleep, concentration and memory are affected, along with increasing irritability. While you sleep, the body is actively repairing damaged tissue, while building bone and muscle. This is why a good night's sleep is so important for growing bodies as well as active individuals!

3. **Prepare the night before.** The morning rush may make it challenging to ensure everyone is properly fed, dressed, and packed for school or work. Having everything ready before going to bed at night helps make the morning process a little less hectic. This means having lunches prepared, clothes laid out, homework complete, and backpacks ready to go. It can also help to have breakfast laid out at the table, depending on what is being served. Checking the weather forecast the night before can help to prepare essentials such as raingear or sunscreen (see which sunscreens are safe

4. **Stay Organized.** It is important to keep study areas and school material tidy, including desks and bags. Less clutter leads to fewer distractions, contributing to better focus and productivity. Establishing a schedule is also helpful in reducing the stress and chaos of a busy household. Hang an erasable calendar on the wall to track important dates and assignments. This may improve time management and ensures you don't forget about commitments.

5. **Establish a study routine.** Extracurricular activities often take over the evening hours and may interfere with getting homework done. Sit down as a family and agree on a timeframe for completing assignments that works with your schedule, be it right after school or following dinner. Homework and chores are more likely to get done without much fuss when they are anticipated and part of a routine. It is also important to begin studying for tests early to avoid last minute cramming; a habit that is stressful and limits how much is retained.

<http://breakingnews.ewg.org/2012sunscreen/>).

What Heavy Backpacks Are Doing To Kids' Bodies

About 5,000 children visit emergency rooms each year because of backpack-related injuries, and at least 14,000 kids are treated for them. While not every kid will go to the hospital because of heavy backpacks, overweight loads can cause neck, back, shoulder pain and more. Below, see what is so dangerous about kids carrying heavy backpacks - and what parents can do about it.

Forward Head Posture **Proper Posture**

Neck and Upper Back
Heavy backpacks create a forward trunk lean (rounding of upper back), causing a forward head posture with extended neck, creating neck and shoulder pain and making it difficult for muscles and ligaments to hold the body up.

Shoulders
Shoulders aren't made to hang things on. When a heavy load is put on kids' shoulders, joints get tight, muscles tighten down, it alters bio-mechanics, and creates potential strain.

Hips
Hips can become sore if a child is bending forward to compensate for the backward pull of their backpack.

Knees
Knee pain is possible because of a change in walking pattern and body posture due to an overweight backpack.

Lower Back
A change in posture by leaning forward to compensate for the weight of the backpack can result in lower and mid back pain and muscle tightness.

Fit and Sizing
Material. Choose backpacks made for kids, made of more lightweight fabric.
Close to the body. The backpack should be close to the body with minimal space between the back and the pack itself.
Length. It should be the length of the torso and the bottom should be two inches below the waist.

Extra Support
Use both shoulders. The backpack should always be worn on two shoulders so that there isn't too much stress on one side of the spine.
Waist strap. Kids should always use the waist strap (preferably a thick one) to help distribute the weight.

Weight
Distribution. Use backpacks with multiple compartments to help distribute the weight of contents. Pack the heavier things low and towards the back, closer to the body.
Ratio. Backpacks should be 10-15 percent of the kid's weight.

Sources: Dr Rob Danoff, an osteopathic family physician, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Elise G. Hewitt, Board Certified Pediatric Chiropractor

Seasonal Allergies

Ragweed season is here. It usually peaks in mid August and continues until first frost in October. With the deep freeze we had last winter, allergies have been worse overall this year. To know what the pollen forecast in your area is, visit:

<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/outdoors/pollen/canada/ontario/hamilton>

While suffering from allergies is not pleasant, there are some proactive measures that can be taken to reduce symptoms:

1. Make your bedroom an allergy free sanctuary.

You are not getting a restful sleep if allergens are bothering you all night. Keep animals and clothing exposed to allergens outside the room. Close windows and run the furnace fan.

2. Shower before bed, washing hair, face, and skin to remove allergen spores. This will keep your pillow free of allergens.

3. Purchase a HEPA filter for your bedroom.

4. Supplementation. This should be discussed with your NaturoMedic.com Naturopathic Doctor.



Be Active!

As the days grow shorter, it is tempting to spend more time indoors and become more sedentary. However, according to Health Canada, children under 5 need 90 minutes of exercise per day and those over 5 need at least 60 minutes daily. Leading an active lifestyle has many health benefits, including:

- Decreased stress
- Healthy growth and development
- Strength
- Increased energy
- Healthy heart
- Self-confidence
- Promotes interaction
- Improves learning and attention
- Feel happier
- Improves mental health (morale and self-esteem)
- Fun!

To promote exercise in children, encourage outdoor activities, play dates, and extracurriculars that involve being physically active. Lead by example and limit time spent watching T.V. Instead, go for a walk, rake the leaves, or go sledding (when the snow arrives). If the week is hectic, get out and do something active as a family on the weekend!

Healthy Lunch Tips

Do you struggle to get your kids on board with healthy eating? Try involving them in the meal planning process. **By giving them input on what they eat and having them help chose and make their food, kids are more likely to eat what is made.** Start by explaining certain goals (for example buying cereal with less than 5g of sugar per serving or finding at least one fruit and vegetable for lunches) and stick to your guidelines at the grocery store. Let them have some say in what is bought, so long as it is within the set goals. Avoid calling these “rules” to minimize any negative associations.

- Avoid packaged foods, including lunchables, hotdogs, and deli-meats, which are all high in sodium and contain preservatives and nitrites. The consumption of nitrites has been shown to cause an increased risk for childhood cancer.
- Pack water instead of milk or juices. Milk contains contaminants like pesticides and antibiotics, which take a toll on the immune system and may lead to allergies. Juices, even when fresh, are high sources of sugar.
- Choose fresh fruit and vegetables instead of fruit cups, which are high in sugar and high fructose corn syrup.
- Choose whole foods, meaning that they have not been refined or processed. These include whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Stay away from sugary, processed snacks. To satisfy the sweet tooth, try dark chocolate with fruit or make your own oatmeal raisin “cookies” by substituting unsweetened applesauce in the place of sugar.

***Nut-free alternatives: for nut-free school policies, seeds can be used instead of nuts. Seed ‘butters’ and flours are great substitutes for recipes and are a great healthy alternative.**



Lunch ideas:

- 1 **Protein.** Cooked chicken wedges, beans and lentils, and hardboiled eggs are all good choices.
- 2 **Whole grains.** Quinoa, brown or black rice, buckwheat, amaranth, and millet are all gluten free options (should this apply to you).
- 3 **Healthy fats.** These include nuts, seeds, and avocado. Try making your own trail mix and add raisins or pieces of dark chocolate as a treat.
- 4 **Vegetables.** Pepper and cucumber slices, carrot and celery sticks, and cherry tomatoes are easy to pack and kid friendly. Add a small container of nut butter or hummus for dipping.
- 5 **Smoothies.** For kids who struggle with eating breakfast or lunch, try adding a healthy protein powder to make it a meal.

Protect your child: Hidden toxins

When it comes to a healthy lifestyle, making the right food choices and getting enough exercise are important factors. This being said, on a daily basis we are exposed to many hidden toxins that take a toll on our systems. Phthalates, a chemical used to soften vinyl plastic (PVC, poly vinyl chloride), is a dangerous toxin that interferes with the endocrine system. This has been linked to asthma, diabetes, ADHD, and birth defects. In fact, 75% of back-to-school items investigated by the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice contained hazardous levels of PVC. Below are a few potential sources of toxins to beware of.

Lunchboxes and Plastic Containers.

Since these come into direct contact with food, there is a risk of contamination. Toxins leach from the plastic, particularly when exposed to heat including microwaves and warm cars. For packing lunches, use non-toxic materials that do not have lead paint, PVC, BPA or antimicrobial chemicals. Heating food in glass containers instead of plastic is best. Use stainless steel utensils or bio-based (made with PLA or PHA plastics).

Water bottles. Since many water bottles are plastic, the same concern of toxins leaching into water applies. PVC, PS (polystyrene), PC (polycarbonate) and BPA free are important. Stainless steel water bottles (or glass for older children) are also an appropriate alternative. Bringing your own filtered water to school is a good idea, since 28% of school water systems in Ontario were found to have lead levels well above Canadian guidelines in 2007.

Backpacks. Look for no PCV on labels and double check that the #3 (PCV symbol) is not listed. While natural fibers are best, nylon and polyester are acceptable.

School building. While there isn't always much choice regarding which schools your child can attend, there are some key aspects that should be looked into. Is the school located close to power lines, large transformers, farms or vineyards? Electromagnetic frequency and radiation exposure has been linked to abnormal cell growth, while pesticides have many negative health effects. How old is the school? Asbestos, lead, and mold should be considered for older buildings, since they contribute to some serious respiratory concerns. Finally, are classes being taught in portables? Newer portables may contain formaldehyde (which is inhaled through off-gassing), while older portables may have mold built-up. Although certain aspects within the school may not be in your control, they may be enough reason to consider another school.

For more information:

<http://www.chej.org/publications/PVCGuide/PVCfree.pdf>

Make a new school year resolution – see how many of our back-to-school tips you can make a regular part of your routine

References

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