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the health advisor

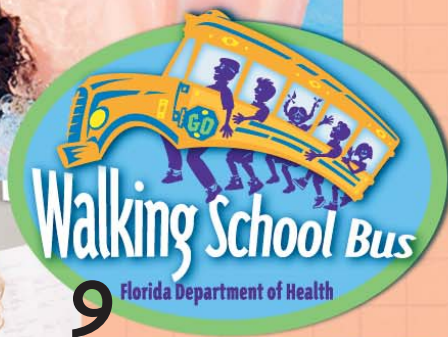
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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MISSION

To promote, protect, and improve the health of all people in Florida.

Health care providers, the goal of the *Health Advisor* is to present health information to your patients, clients, and community partners in a reader-friendly format. Pages are designed for posting or handouts. If there is a topic that you would like the *Health Advisor* to cover, contact us.

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For the 2010 National Health Observances calendar visit: www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp

Please Pass the Vegetables!

By Mary Whitesell, Florida Department of Health, Division of Family Health



Have you ever seen kids enthusiastically eating a plateful of colorful veggies, and then wondered about the mom and dad's secret for getting their children to eat veggies: was it child psychology or bribery? Maybe the parents knew to set good examples for healthy eating, or they talked to their children about the importance of eating vegetables.

By now, you've probably heard the benefits of eating your vegetables: vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber; they can protect you from chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. For adults, eating the three to five servings of vegetables recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Pyramid (2½ to 3 cups per day) can improve health, and it's not that hard to do when you consider all of the fresh, frozen, and canned vegetable choices available in your grocery store.

But getting kids to eat more vegetables can be a real challenge. Studies show that most children do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables: 1 to 2½ cups per day depending on a child's age. For instance, a child between age 2 and 3 should eat 1 cup per day, while a child between age 4 and 8 should eat 1½ cups per day. Older children, between age 9 and 13, should eat 2 to 2½ cups per day.

Many parents find it hard to get their kids to eat just a ½ cup of vegetables every day so a little planning is advised to up veggie intake! Start the process by including your child in meal planning, grocery shopping, and preparation; then add a variety of vegetables to your family's diet. Someday, with patience and ingenuity, you too can be the parent whose children happily wolf down a plateful of vibrant, colorful veggies. Practice the following to improve everyone's health in your home.

- Ask your children to write down the vegetables they would like to try.
- Ask your children to help wash and prepare the vegetables (make sure activities are age appropriate).
- Keep a weekly chart on the refrigerator and place a star on the board each time your child eats a vegetable.
- Be a great role model and eagerly eat lots of vegetables.
- Keep vegetables washed, trimmed, and in bite-size pieces in the refrigerator for your children to snack on.
- Add crunchy veggies with a dip to lunch bags.
- Mix in vegetables with starches: try adding broccoli bits to rice.
- Add vegetables like chopped mushrooms or pureed leftover carrots to tomato sauce.
- Add vegetables to casserole dishes and soups.
- Value repetition. Sometimes it takes 10 or 20 tries before a child learns to like a vegetable.

➔ For more information, contact Mary Whitesell at mary_whitesell@doh.state.fl.us.



Giving Something Back

By Christina Awtey, Florida Department of Health, Highlands County Health Department

I stand in an empty building. Well, empty may not be an accurate term. The building is filled with everything a new health department site needs—waiting room furniture, filing systems, desks, dental chairs, and medical equipment.

I am the only person in the building. The new key lies in my hand. The builder and subcontractors are finished and have moved on. In less than two weeks, we will hold our open house. Our reassigned and newly hired staff waits anxiously to move in and begin. But today, I am alone.

As I take a last walk through the site, I can't help but think back to another time. Back 27 years ago. To the day that my daughter was born. The year was 1982. My husband worked for a factory that made steel cable. It was a good job with decent pay. I had happily given up my job five months earlier with dreams of being a stay-at-home mom. At least for the first few years.

But this was not meant to be. One hour after we celebrated the birth of our beautiful daughter, my husband received a phone call from a co-worker stating that the company had closed their doors. We now had a baby and no income. We were thankful that our daughter was healthy. However, even healthy babies need care. We received that care through our local health department. Luckily, we had a site in our neighborhood within walking distance. Gasoline for our car was a luxury that we couldn't afford. I remember walking to my appointments holding my daughter. I remember that the health department was located in the bottom level of an old building. The walls were dingy green and in need of paint. The floors were of chipped linoleum. Folding chairs and one old army surplus desk were the only furniture in the waiting area. The medical equipment, while functional, was far from new. The atmosphere was dull. The staff were a different story. They were helpful. They were kind. They were understanding. Their dedication showed in everything that they did. They were an example.

In 1995, I became a staff member of the Highlands County Health Department. From the beginning, I noticed the same level of dedication among my co-workers that I had seen in 1982. Over the years, I met staff from various health departments and learned that this remains a constant. Most people who work in public health do so because they care about those in their communities. They truly do make a difference.

➤ Read the rest of the story at HealthyStories.net.

Miami-Dade CHD Publishes Fourth Edition of *Healthy Stories*

By Tracie Dickerson, Florida Department of Health, Miami-Dade County Health Department

THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S (CHD) award-winning publication *Healthy Stories*, America's only public health literary journal, has recently released its fourth edition.

The 2010 edition is bigger, better, and bolder than before. Stories in this volume focus on: tobacco and alcohol cessation, sanitary nuisances (Chinese drywall for one), refugee health, injury prevention, sexually transmitted diseases, drug addiction, communicable diseases (HIV/AIDs, H1N1 and dengue fever), salmonella, physical activity and nutritional health, chronic disease prevention, cancer, euthanasia, and mental health. One reader, corresponding by e-mail, wrote, "I enjoyed *Healthy Stories* so much that I read the whole book in one sitting. I couldn't put it down."

Last year, the Washington D.C. journalist Teddi Dineley Johnson of *The Nations Health*, a widely read public health newspaper, described the 2009 edition of *Healthy Stories* as the public health version of the popular

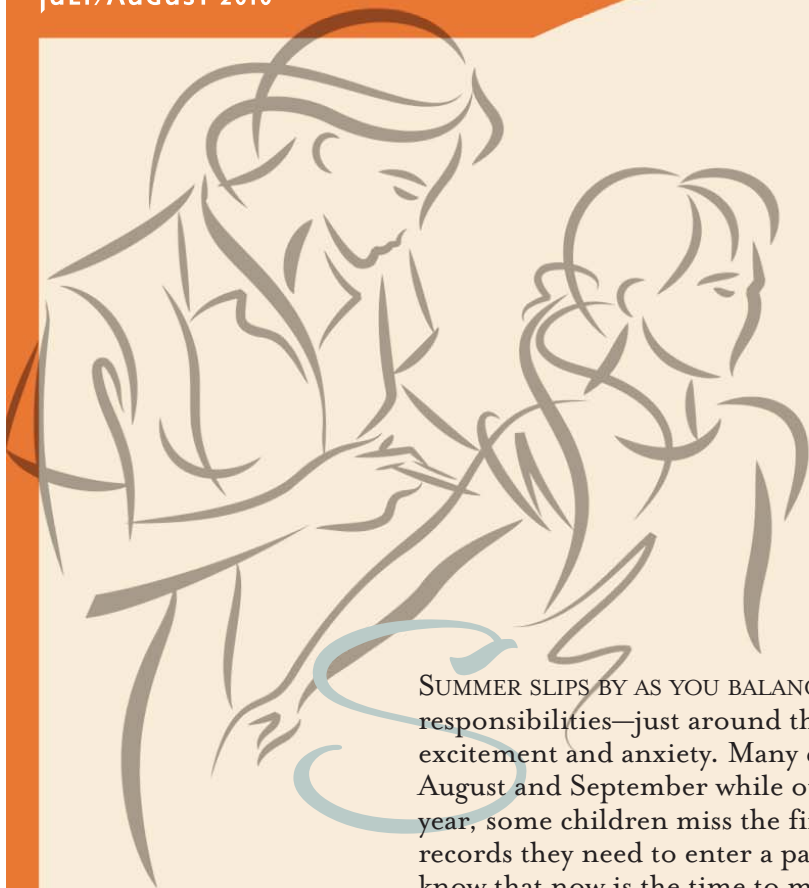
inspirational series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.

According to Administrator Lillian Rivera of the Miami-Dade CHD, "*Healthy Stories* has helped Miami-Dade County by promoting public health concepts in an innovative way to our community. The stories are published in English, Spanish, and Creole to reach out to Miami's diverse population."

Healthy Stories is available at your local library or it can be purchased from Amazon (www.amazon.com) or directly from the Miami-Dade CHD. The cost is around \$10.00. You can read all four editions of *Healthy Stories* at HealthyStories.net.

➤ Submissions of public health related short stories, poetry, and recipes for the 2011 edition can be made to Mort_Laitner@doh.state.fl.us.





Avoid Back-to-School Jitters. Don't Wait until the Last Minute to Submit Physical Exam and Immunization Forms!

By Laura Rutledge, Florida Department of Health, Division of Disease Control

Immunizing your children against vaccine-preventable diseases is one of the most important things you can do as a parent or caregiver.

SUMMER SLIPS BY AS YOU BALANCE VACATIONS, family obligations, and other responsibilities—just around the corner is the new school year bringing both excitement and anxiety. Many children are entering school for the first time this August and September while others are getting ready to move up a year. But each year, some children miss the first day of school because they do not have the health records they need to enter a particular grade. Public health officials want you to know that now is the time to make sure your child is ready for the coming school year. Ease first day jitters, and have school physicals and immunizations done early.

Students from kindergarten through grade 12 who are making their initial entry into a Florida school must present a record of a physical examination completed within the past 12 months and a completed Florida Certification of Immunization (DH Form 680). These records should be taken to the child's school upon enrollment. Although a specific form is not required, it is recommended that Florida's standardized School Entry Exam form (DH Form 3040) be used to document completion of a physical examination. It must be completed by a medical provider licensed to perform physical examinations in Florida.

The DH 680, or "blue form," must be completed and signed by a licensed Florida physician or Florida county health department staff. This form may not be completed by medical providers outside of Florida. A child's complete immunization history can be transferred to the DH 680 by a private Florida medical provider or county health department staff. Also, make sure teenagers are up to date with required and recommended vaccines before they head off to college.

Contact your medical provider or your local county health department for more information.

➔ Additional information about health requirements and school immunizations for children can be found at the following Florida Department of Health Web sites: www.immunizeFlorida.org/community/index.htm and www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/school/parent/parent_info.

Physical Activity. It All Adds up!

Submitted by the Florida Department of Health,
Division of Family Health

BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE CAN HELP CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT, improve your motor skills, increase bone density, reduce anxiety and stress, and keep your heart healthy. If you are not physically active, you are at higher risk for many health problems such as: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoarthritis, sleep and breathing problems, some cancers, and overweight or obesity. Many people are advised by their doctors to exercise and become more physically active, but in Florida less than 30% of adults follow this advice. According to the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 25.4% of Floridians describe themselves as inactive, and only 26% meet the recommendations for vigorous physical activity.

What is physical activity? Physical activity can be any form of exercise or movement including planned activities like walking, running, sports and dancing. Household chores, yard work, walking the dog, and playing Frisbee, hopscotch or catch with your kids are all physical activities. Anything that gets you up and moving is physical activity.

How much physical activity do I need? Adults need at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity like brisk walking every week or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity like jogging or running every week. Moderate-intensity activity should make you feel like you are exerting some effort, but you should be able to carry on a conversation comfortably during the activity. Vigorous activity should make you breathe hard and increase your heart rate greatly—this kind of physical activity should be a challenge!



If 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, you don't have to do it all at once. It's good to spread your activity out during the week and break it up into smaller pieces of time during the day as long as you're active in a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time. Try going for a 10-minute brisk walk, three times a day, five days a week. This will give you a total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity.

Kids need exercise too: 30–60 minutes of physical activity on most or all days of the week. To support physical education in schools, the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, in partnership with the Florida Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools, is using an America Recovery and Reinvestment Act award to provide training for physical education staff, curriculum materials, and physical activity supplies to all of Florida's public middle schools (over 590 schools).

How do I begin? Choose activities you enjoy the most—you'll more likely stick with them. Gradually reach your goal by increasing the length of time you're active, the intensity, or both. Vary your activities so you won't get bored. There are 1440 minutes in every day—schedule 30 of them for physical activity, enjoy a healthy lifestyle, and have fun!

➔ Visit www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity or www.healthierus.gov/exercise.



Make Physical Activity a Part of Your Daily Routine:

- Walk, cycle, jog, or skate to work, school, the store, or place of worship.
- Get on or off the bus several blocks away from where you need to be.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Play with your children or pets.
- Take fitness breaks—walking or doing desk exercises—instead of cigarette or coffee breaks.
- Try gardening or home repair activities.
- Park the car farther away from the door to the office or the store.
- Exercise while watching TV (use hand weights, a stationary bicycle, a treadmill, or a stair climber).
- Dance to music.
- Keep a pair of comfortable walking or running shoes in your car and office.

FOR YOUTH:

- Support physical education classes during school for all ages.
- Encourage activity at recess.
- Include physical activity in after-school programs.
- Include the whole family in physical activity.
- Limit time spent watching TV, playing video games, and using the computer for recreation.
- Encourage sports and other forms of physical activity such as dance and gymnastics.

Candy Is Sweet. Tobacco Isn't.

Tobacco Free Florida Exposes Flavored Tobacco

Submitted by the Florida Department of Health, Division of Health Access and Tobacco

Tobacco companies have long denied targeting youth with their flavored tobacco products, but a recent poll by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found that one in five youth between the ages of 12 and 17 had seen flavored tobacco products or ads, while only one in 10 adults reported having seen them. When the FDA was recently given the authority to regulate tobacco products, their first act of business was banning the distribution and sales of flavored cigarettes. This was a profound first step in protecting Florida's youth from Big Tobacco's pattern of aiming flavored tobacco products and advertisements at children and young adults.

However, flavored tobacco still comes in a variety of products such as cigars, cigarillos, and smokeless with flavors ranging from cool mint to chocolate chip cookie dough. These products have an alluring appeal and are often referred to by public health officials as gateways for children and young adults to become regular tobacco users. According to the FDA, young tobacco users choose flavored products because they "taste better" and are perceived as "safer."

Another way Big Tobacco is targeting youth is through product packaging. Many flavored tobacco products are packaged in bright colors and bold graphics that resemble the designs of candy containers. In a study done by the FDA, 52% of youth smokers between the ages of 13 and 18 who had heard of flavored cigarettes reported interest in trying them, and nearly 60% thought that flavored cigarettes would taste better than regular cigarettes.

➔ For more information about how you can help youth in your community "be free" from the lure of flavored tobacco, visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/get-involved.

Enjoy the Water. Safely.

Submitted by the Florida Department of Health,
Division of Emergency Medical Operations

IN 1513, WHEN PONCE DE LEÓN WAS SEARCHING FOR A MYTHICAL FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, his ships landed on a lavish land so beautiful that Ponce named it Florida meaning “feast of flowers”

in Spanish. At the time, Ponce could only see as far as what is now the St. Augustine area, so little did he know that Florida not only is a feast of flowers but Florida is also a feast of water. Surrounded by water, lakes of water within, the Floridan aquifer system below, and now pools of water behind homes, within hotels, parks, and town and city centers, Florida could also have been named for its abundance of water.

So with all of this water, and the fact that water can be enjoyed in Florida all year long, it's important to practice safe swimming behaviors, and learn to prevent injuries and recreational water illnesses (RWIs). RWIs are illnesses spread by swallowing, being exposed, or breathing in the vapors of contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, spas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans.



Everyone can have a healthy and fun swimming experience! Follow these tips when swimming:

- Watch children at all times—they can drown in seconds and in silence, and should not be left alone.
- Make sure children swim within designated swimming areas of rivers, lakes, bays, the Atlantic, and the Gulf of Mexico.
- Do not dive in less than nine feet of water. If there isn't a diving board, don't dive!
- Teach children age 4 and older how to swim.
- Don't swim if you have diarrhea.
- Don't swallow the water.
- Don't use air-filled swimming aids or toys in place of life jackets or life preservers.
- Swim with a buddy and select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.

■ Watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip tides and currents. Know and obey posted warnings.

■ Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or other water activities.

■ Protect against sunburn. Use a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15, and with both UVA and UVB protection. Re-apply sunscreen after swimming.

■ Adults should learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life.

MORE TIPS FOR SWIMMING IN POOLS:

■ Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming, and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing a child's diaper.

■ Take children on frequent bathroom breaks and check diapers often.

■ Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area—not at poolside.

MORE TIPS FOR SWIMMING IN FRESHWATER LAKES AND RIVERS:

■ Avoid water-related activities in bodies of warm freshwater, hot springs, and thermally-polluted water such as water around power plants.

■ Avoid water-related activities in warm freshwater during periods of high water temperature and low water levels.

■ Hold your nose shut or use nose clips when you swim in bodies of warm freshwater such as lakes, rivers, or hot springs.

■ Avoid digging in or stirring up the sediment in shallow, warm freshwater.



Here are some successful strategies that we encourage corporate and organizational partners to get involved with:

- Collaborate with the local health departments, school systems, and the faith community. They assist children with immunizations, exams, and enrollment assistance for Florida KidCare.
- Work with schools to include Florida KidCare flyers in packets for low-cost or free lunches or in other school packets that are sent home with each student.
- Distribute information about the Florida KidCare program to principals about how families can benefit from the services before school starts.
- Fill Florida KidCare bags with school supplies and program information and distribute to low-income families.

➔ For more information contact Jodi A. Ray at 813.974.3143 or jray@health.usf.edu.

Florida Covering Kids & Families

Getting the Word **Out** and Getting Children **Into** Health Insurance

By Jodi A. Ray, University of South Florida, College of Public Health

THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN IS A SERIES OF EVENTS that take place across Florida to enroll eligible, uninsured children in Florida KidCare. Events are held during July, August, and September to provide information to families about the importance of health care coverage for their children. Florida KidCare already covers 1.8 million children. The Back-to-School Campaign is a great opportunity to enroll 22,000 more children this year.

Florida Covering Kids & Families is a statewide program that collaborates with partner agencies (the Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, and the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation) to conduct extensive outreach around the state. Starting with the Back-to-School Campaign, activities are accomplished within existing resources. We identify partners across the state to participate in events and to maximize opportunities to promote Florida KidCare. Florida Covering Kids & Families participates in health fairs and National Night Out events, facilitates public service announcements, and works to include Florida KidCare enrollment information with local utility bills and on prescription drug bags through retailers (thanks to Albertsons and Walgreens).

During the Back-to-School Campaign, Florida Covering Kids & Families works with four of the local coalitions and hosts enrollment fairs or press conferences focused on increasing awareness of Florida KidCare's availability and helping families apply for it. These partnerships include key stakeholders, businesses, and consumers working together to enroll and retain children in the program. These coalitions partner with schools year round, but during back-to-school time they emphasize the importance of ensuring kids are healthy and ready to learn as they start the new school year. Back-to-school health fairs and school supply giveaways are very successful events for the campaign.



Communities Putting Prevention to Work State and Territory Initiatives

By Emily Fritz, Florida Department of Health, Division of Family Health Services

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WAS AWARDED \$2.1 MILLION IN FUNDS from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to improve the health of Floridians through the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program.

Thirteen regional coordinators located across the state are working with county health departments, local health advocacy groups, civic organizations, school districts, and city and county officials to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes. These regional coordinators work with policymakers at the local level to put into effect three interventions for their local communities: increased physical activity, improved nutrition, and more tobacco-free public facilities.

INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY The physical activity initiative focuses on elementary school children through the creation of walking school buses. Since 2005, walking school bus programs around the U.S. have encouraged healthy and active lifestyles and taught thousands of young children about pedestrian safety. A walking school bus is made up of a group of children who are escorted by parents or volunteers while walking to school. One adult serves as the “driver” at the front of the line and another adult is the “conductor” at the end. School districts across the state will hold kick offs on International Walk to School Day on Oct. 6.

IMPROVED NUTRITION The second intervention increases the number of school districts that support breastfeeding for employees with infants under the age of one. Breastfed infants have fewer respiratory infections, ear infections, and a lower incidence of obesity. In addition, lactating women recover from their pregnancies faster and are more successful at returning to their normal weight. Because of these health advantages, school districts that implement breastfeeding-support policies should see a lower incidence of employee absenteeism, reduced health care costs, and improved employee morale.

MORE TOBACCO-FREE PUBLIC FACILITIES The final intervention is to develop tobacco-free policies for city, county, and state parks. This will protect Floridians from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Children with asthma playing in tobacco-free parks will no longer suffer from an asthma attack triggered by second-hand smoke. Tobacco-free policies also improve the environment with less litter—tobacco products, including cigarette butts, are the most littered items in the U.S.

The Florida Department of Health’s CPPW program looks forward to working toward a healthier state.

