

SOONERCARE

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This newsletter is just for SoonerCare members. It will tell you about any changes or updates to your SoonerCare benefits. It will also give you other useful news to help keep you healthy. However, if you have specific questions about your health, please talk to your doctor.

Your SoonerCare Companion will arrive in your mailbox about every four months from the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. If you have questions about SoonerCare, please call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767.

Spring 2010



Oklahoma Health Care Authority
 4545 N. Lincoln
 Suite 124
 Oklahoma City, OK 73105
 www.okhca.org



COMPANION

Your baby needs 39 weeks, if possible!

If your mom's coming into town or your husband gets some unexpected time off, what's the harm in having your baby a few weeks early? You can always ask your doctor to induce if you're close enough-right?

You should really think again.

SoonerCare is working to encourage our pregnant members to stay pregnant for at least 39 weeks, unless your OB/GYN thinks an early delivery is required for the health and safety of you and your baby.

Those last few weeks of pregnancy really do matter. For one thing, your baby's brain and lungs are still growing. A baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39 to 40 weeks. The baby's lungs are still developing, too.

Your baby also is gaining the weight that will help it stay warm once it's born, and be able to

suck, swallow and stay awake to feed. Babies born too early also tend to have more health problems at birth and later in life.

Please talk with your doctor if you have any specific questions about your pregnancy.

We're sending all our SoonerCare mothers-to-be a brochure, "Why the Last Weeks of Pregnancy Count." It explains more about why waiting for full-term birth is so important

for your baby. It also talks about the serious risks you could face if you choose to deliver early for non-medical reasons.

If you have Internet access, there's more good information at SoonerCare's Web site, www.okhca.org (look under "Individuals," then "Stay Healthy!") and also www.marchofdimmes.com.

We want you to have the best possible chance of a healthy pregnancy and birth!



Do you speak PCP?

As a SoonerCare member, you have the right to choose your PCP and help decide about your medical care. It is easier to do this when you prepare before going to see your PCP. The better you are prepared, the better your provider is able to take care of you.

Here are some tips on talking to your PCP:

- **Make a list of your medicines, including the dose, how many you take and how often you take them.** Sometimes your pharmacy can print off a list of your medicines for you. Be sure to include anything you take, even over-the-counter medication, natural herbs, vitamins or supplements. It is important for your PCP to know everything you take since medicines can often interact with each other.

- **Write down a list of your questions and concerns.** Describe any symptoms you have, when they started and if anything makes them better. Share your health history with your PCP, including any allergies you have. Your PCP can help you better if he or she knows your entire health history, even if it's something embarrassing. If you have had any recent tests, be sure to tell your PCP. If you have the results, take them with you.

- **Even if you're nervous or scared, don't be afraid to ask questions.** If you don't, your PCP will think you understand what he or she said. You might like to take a friend or family member with you to help you remember what your PCP said. Your PCP may also be able to draw you pictures or give you brochures or other materials to explain things.

If you do these things, your visits will go more smoothly. Your PCP also will have more time to visit with you. And always remember, if for some reason you can't go to your appointment, please call to cancel.

Loss of sense of smell linked to using Zicam swabs, gels

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sent out a recall for Zicam swabs and gels. People used the products in their noses to help fight off colds. The FDA had learned of people who lost their sense of smell after using these Zicam products:

- **Zicam Cold Remedy Nasal Gel.**
- **Zicam Cold Remedy Swabs.**
- **Zicam Cold Remedy Swabs, Kids' Size.**

The FDA remains worried about people who still have these items in their homes. If you have any of these



What are dental fillings?

Dental fillings are used to restore or "fill" a tooth that has a hole (cavity) in it. They also fill places where the tooth is starting to rot (decay).

What is a tooth-colored filling?

Tooth-colored fillings may also be called "composite" or "resin" by your dentist. These fillings are best when used for smaller cavities. They may need to be replaced more often than silver-colored ones.

What is a silver-colored filling?

Silver-colored fillings may be called "amalgam" by your dentist. They have been used by dentists for more than 150 years. They tend to last longer than tooth-colored fillings. This material seems best when several teeth have decay.

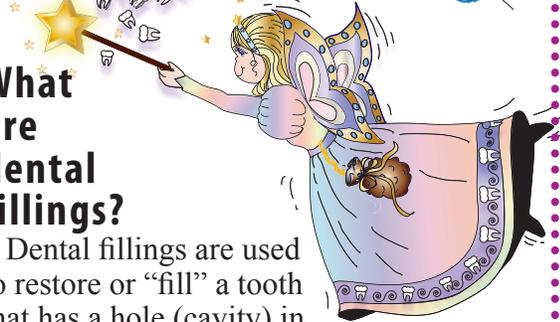
Are silver-colored fillings safe?

YES, they are safe to use. Much research has been done. The Food and Drug Administration and the American Dental Association agree they are safe for children and adults.

Which is right for my child?

Be sure to discuss this with your dentist. Together you can make a decision that is best for your child!

Ask the Tooth Fairy



products, you should throw them away NOW. The loss of smell can occur after the first use or after many uses.

If you have lost your sense of smell after using one of these products, call your PCP. You also can call the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

The main ingredient in these products is zinc. The zinc is thought to damage parts of the nose that it needs in order to smell. Zinc is still an important part of your diet. As long as you get your zinc through food, vitamins or cough drops, it will not hurt your sense of smell.

What car seat is right for my child?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death among children in the United States. A properly installed and used car seat reduces a child's risk of death in a car crash.

In a rear-facing seat, the harness straps should be snug at or below your baby's shoulders. Make sure to read the car seat directions for the proper reclining angle.

When your child outgrows the weight and age limit of a rear-facing car seat, reinstall it. The car seat should then be forward facing. The harness straps of a forward-facing

car seat should be snug, and the shoulder straps should be at or above the child's shoulders.

Children can be in a booster seat at about 80 pounds and 8 years old. In a booster seat, the shoulder belt should not be across the neck or throat but across the middle of the chest and shoulder. The lap belt should be snug across the upper thighs and not across the child's belly.

This chart for 2010 is from the American Academy of Pediatrics. You also can find more information about car seats at www.HealthyChildren.org.



Age Group	Type of Seat	General Guidelines
Infants 	Infant seats and rear-facing convertible seats	Infants should ride rear facing until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat's maker. At a minimum, children should ride rear facing until they have reached at least 1 year of age and weigh at least 20 pounds. When children reach the highest weight or length allowed by the manufacturer of their infant-only seat, they should continue to ride rear facing in a convertible seat.
Toddlers/preschoolers 	Convertible seats and forward-facing seats with harnesses	It is best for children to ride rear facing as long as possible to the highest weight and height allowed by the manufacturer of their convertible seat. When they have outgrown the seat rear facing, they should use a forward-facing seat with a full harness as long as they fit.
School-aged children 	Booster seats	Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing car safety seats. Children should stay in a booster seat until adult belts fit correctly (usually when a child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age).
Older Children	Seat belts	Children who have outgrown their booster seats should ride in a lap and shoulder seat belt in the backseat until age 13.

'Pharm Parties' pose threat to teens

There is a scary new drug trend among teenagers, and it doesn't matter what sex, race or income level they are: prescription drug use. Young people are getting together at "pharm parties," where they mix different types of prescription drugs in a bowl called a "trail mix."

In Oklahoma, 86 percent of drug-related deaths in 2008 were attributed to prescription drugs. Many of them are young people.

Warning signs

- Extreme changes in emotions or behaviors.
- Lying and hiding.
- Sudden friendships or appetite changes.
- Loss of interest in hobbies or other activities.

Things you can do

Monitor your prescriptions. Start taking notes on how many pills you have for each prescription, and track your refills. Make sure that others in your family, especially grandparents, know to do the same. If your teen has access to other households, such as friends' homes, talk to their parents. Make sure they know how to take steps to help keep teens from abusing prescription drugs. If medicine is prescribed for your teen, make sure you control how it is taken.

Secure all the medicines in your home. Treat medications like other valuables in your home. Lock them up or store them in a secure, hidden place that your teen cannot reach. Ask grandparents and the parents of your teenager's friends to do the same.

Safely dispose of all expired or unused medicines when your teen is not at home. Because teens will retrieve trashed medications, you should put them in used coffee grounds, other trash or kitty litter. Put the mixture into an empty can or bag and discard. Do not flush medicines down the toilet. It is not safe for the environment! Remove any personal information from the bottles. That will keep someone else from refilling them and will protect your privacy.

Many teens abuse prescription drugs because they believe they're safer than street drugs. If medicines are prescribed by a doctor, then



they believe the drugs are safe and can be taken in any quantity. That is NOT true! Let your teen know that prescription drugs can be as dangerous as street drugs when not used as prescribed and for their intended purpose. Medicines work for the sick but could have the opposite effect on someone who is healthy. Also, talk to teens about the dangers of mixing drugs and alcohol – this combination can be deadly.

Take time to learn about this growing problem. Talk to your teen in a calm way with accurate information. Teens are 50 percent less likely to abuse drugs if they are talked to about drug abuse at home. If you suspect that your teen is abusing prescription drugs, the first good step is to contact your child's pediatrician or a drug counselor.

Are you feeling 'down'?

We hear a lot about depression. It is important to know that there are two very distinct kinds, although the symptoms are the same.

If you are depressed, you may have a hard time sleeping or concentrating. You may be irritable or suffer from grief, anxiety and guilt. Maybe you're less interested in life and have less energy, or your weight may go up or down.

The first kind of depression is what we call "situational" depression. It comes on when something hard has happened in our lives. Examples would be the loss of a loved one or a job or a crisis such as a tornado or a car wreck. This kind of depression is usually mild and will eventually go away. Sometimes, talking to a doctor or a therapist can help you deal with your reaction to the situation.

You can also help yourself. Activities that can help you feel better include exercising, eating healthy and spending time with supportive friends and family. It's also good to do a hobby or activity you loved doing in the past.

The second kind of depression is called "clinical" or "chronic" depression. This can be a depressed mood that has been bothering you for a long time. It also can be a sudden mood change that may not be related to anything happening in your life, and it may be related to a family history of depression.

This kind of depression's symptoms are more severe, and they do not let up.

You may not be able function effectively, or you may find yourself being angry and doing things impulsively. You may even have suicidal feelings. A clinical or chronic depression must be treated by a professional. You should see your doctor or a therapist to find out if you need medicine and specialized treatment.

Depression is normal in certain situations and events. We sometimes call it "feeling down." It rarely has anything to do with "being crazy." Almost everyone has experienced it at some point in life. But do not discount it. It is there because something has happened, or because you are overwhelmed. If it does not go away after a while, getting some professional advice is always a good thing to do.

Store, Throw Away Drugs Safely

It is very important to store medicines the right way. Keeping medicines in the right place helps make sure that they work and keeps children safe. The three most important things to remember about storing medicines the right way are:

- **Keep them away from children.**
- **Keep them in a cool, dry place.**
- **Keep them away from sunlight.**

Some people keep their drugs in a medicine cabinet in the bathroom. This is not the best place because bathrooms can get very warm and damp. Other people keep drugs in the refrigerator. Even though this is a cool place, it is not very dry. If a medicine needs to stay in the refrigerator, it will say so on the package. Unless the package says differently, the best place to keep medicine is in a kitchen cabinet. The cabinet should be higher than your child can reach and away from bright light from windows.

Throwing drugs away correctly is also important. When a medicine is no longer needed or gets too old, it needs to be thrown away. Over-the-counter medicines that you can buy without a prescription will have an expiration date on the package. Always throw away old medicines that are past the expiration date. Also throw away prescription medicines that haven't been used after one year.

Don't flush unused medicines down the toilet! It's not safe for the environment. The best way to throw medicines away is to take them out of the original bottle or package, mix them with coffee grounds or kitty litter, and throw them in the trash. Doing this makes sure other people are not likely to take them out of the trash. It is also important to scratch off any private information that may be on the bottle.

Ask your pharmacist if you ever have questions about the right way to store or throw away medicines.

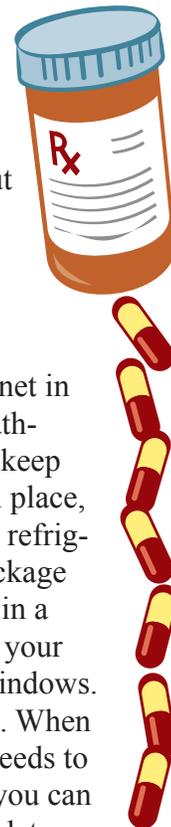
Finish Your Antibiotics

If your doctor gives you an antibiotic, it's very important to take all of it, even if you start feeling better.

If you don't take all of the antibiotics, some of the germs that made you sick (called bacteria) can stay alive in your body. These leftover germs are often harder to kill, and antibiotics may not work on them the next time you're sick. These super-germs, called "antibiotic-resistant bacteria," are very hard to get rid of.

Taking all of the antibiotics your doctor gives you can help make sure that all the germs are killed, so that antibiotics will still work the next time you get sick.

Of course, if you think you are having side effects from the antibiotics, check with your doctor before continuing their use.



Get the most from kids' cold and cough medicines

Kids can have colds several times each year. In the past, parents have often used over-the-counter medicines to help their kids feel better. Many people think that if medicine is safe for adults, then it is also safe for kids. This is not always true.

Children younger than age 6 should not use any over-the-counter medicine except for pain and fever. Some of the ingredients in these medicines can cause serious and sometimes deadly problems, especially in children under 2 years old. Always talk to your child's doctor before giving him or her any medicine, and be sure not to give aspirin unless your doctor says to.

- If your child's doctor suggests an over-the-counter medicine, keep the following tips in mind:
 - Never give adult medicines to kids. Kids should only take medicines marked for use in children, also called "pediatric" use.
 - Always read the package label. Follow directions carefully.
 - Always use the measuring device (dropper, dosing cup or dosing spoon) that is packaged with the child's medicine. A kitchen teaspoon is not a good way to measure medicines for children.
 - Tylenol and ibuprofen are good for fever and pain, but these medicines are also added to many cough and cold medicines. This can sometimes cause kids to get too much by mistake.
 - Here are some other ways to treat cold symptoms and help kids feel better:
 - Use a cool mist vaporizer to add water to the air in your house.
 - Saline (saltwater) nose drops can help clear thick mucus from a runny nose
 - A rubber nose bulb can help clear congestion.
 - Give them chicken soup and lots of liquids like water, juice and milk.



Does your child have allergies, or is it a cold?

According to Babycenter.com, a child who has allergies will most likely have symptoms at the same time each year. That's because each plant tends to release pollen at about the same time from year to year.

So how do you tell if your child has allergies and not the common cold? Symptoms of allergies include:

- A runny nose with clear mucus for about four weeks.
- No temperature.
- In a good mood most of the time.
- Seems better indoors, especially in the car with the air conditioner on. (Car air conditioners can filter most pollen out of the air coming into the car.)

If you think your child has allergies, take your little one to your doctor. Your doctor can prescribe allergy medicine that will help your child's symptoms.



Text messages offered to pregnant women, new moms

More than 500,000 babies – 1 in every 8 – are born prematurely in the United States. Premature babies are at higher risk for health problems and delayed mental growth. Text4baby, a free text-message educational program for pregnant women and new mothers, gives useful tips to help avoid such problems.

The service is sponsored by the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. The messages focus on topics critical to the health of moms and babies. Subjects include shots, eating well, seasonal flu, mental health, smoking and alcohol, oral health, safe sleep and more.

Women who sign up for the services by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for Spanish) receive three free text messages each week timed to their due date or the baby's date of birth. Text4baby messages also connect women to local clinics and support services for prenatal and infant care.

Research shows that 90 percent of Americans own a cell phone and women of child-bearing age text frequently. Text4baby puts good information from national organizations right at their fingertips.

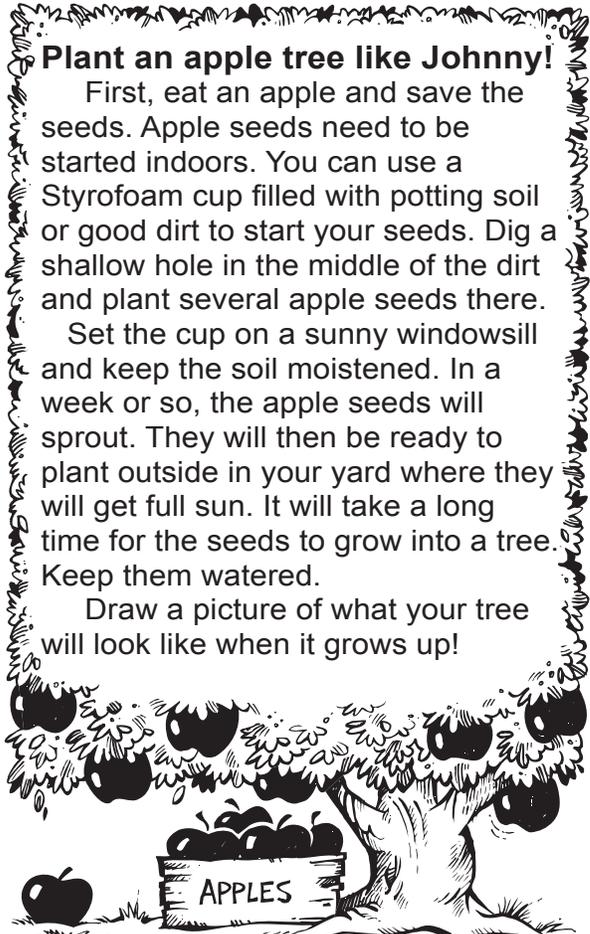


An Apple a Day Keeps Kids at Play!

We have all heard "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." It's TRUE!
When kids eat healthy food, they stay well and have more time to play!

Johnny Appleseed was a man who sold and gave away seeds and seedlings to the pioneers. In order to help the new homesteaders, the law required each settler to plant 50 apple trees the first year. Because of the poor transportation in the country in those days, apples were a practical need in the early settlers' diets. Apples are also necessary for your health. Apples are a versatile fruit because they can be eaten raw, cooked or baked.

Apples don't have fat, cholesterol or sodium, which may help you maintain a healthy weight and heart. Apples do have lots of fiber to keep your colon healthy and small amounts of potassium, which may help promote heart health.



Plant an apple tree like Johnny!

First, eat an apple and save the seeds. Apple seeds need to be started indoors. You can use a Styrofoam cup filled with potting soil or good dirt to start your seeds. Dig a shallow hole in the middle of the dirt and plant several apple seeds there.

Set the cup on a sunny windowsill and keep the soil moistened. In a week or so, the apple seeds will sprout. They will then be ready to plant outside in your yard where they will get full sun. It will take a long time for the seeds to grow into a tree. Keep them watered.

Draw a picture of what your tree will look like when it grows up!



Grown-ups, help kids make a MICROWAVE BAKED APPLE

- 1 med. baking apple
- *2 tsp. raisins or
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- chopped nuts
- 2 tsp. butter
- Cinnamon

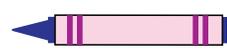
Wash and core apple. Slice a thin section of skin from top of apple. Fill center of the apple with brown sugar and raisins or nuts and top with butter. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Cook uncovered in microwave 2 to 2 1/2 minutes at high or until almost tender. Let stand five minutes before serving. **Optional*



Soozie SoonerCare and Rascal's

Kids Corner

Activities



www.okhca.org/kids-corner.

'Kids Corner' Offers Lots of Fun!

"Kids Corner" is a new feature on OHCA's Web site. Kids can find coloring pages and activity calendars that have good information. Kids Corner also has a lot of fun, creative ideas about healthy food choices, great exercises and learning activities for the whole family.

Health Guides Soozie SoonerCare (a scissor-tailed flycatcher) and Rascal (an Oklahoma raccoon) host a page with neat things for parents, too, including downloads for both a tooth brushing chart and a Tooth Fairy Certificate.

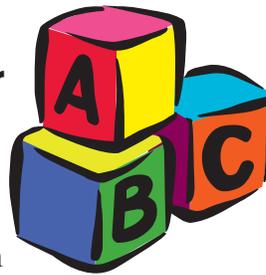
Be sure to check it out at www.okhca.org/kids-corner. Soozie SoonerCare and Rascal will be waiting with something new and exciting each month!

B is for black women and breast cancer

Breast and cervical screenings are important. These tools help your doctor prevent cancer or find it before you have symptoms. Sometimes, these screenings find precancerous conditions that can be treated before they become cancer. Plus, breast and cervical cancer are often highly treatable if found early. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists suggest that most women receive a well-woman checkup each year. A well-woman visit means a general exam along with breast and pelvic exams. A Pap test may be included.

Women age 40 and older should see their doctor for a breast exam every year. Women in their 20s and 30s should have a breast exam about every three years. The American Cancer Society says women should have mammograms every year starting at age 40. Generally, cervical cancer screenings, also called Pap tests, should begin about three years after becoming sexually active, but no later than age 21. Most women should have a Pap test every year.

Black women face a higher risk for early breast cancer, so it is very important they have regular screenings to help lower their risk. Some research suggests that black women are not screened as often as other groups. Research also shows that young black women have a higher risk of more aggressive forms of breast cancer. They also



ABCs
of
SoonerCare

tend to get cancer at an earlier age than white women. The American Cancer Society says that black women are more likely to die from breast cancer than any other racial or ethnic group. About one-third of black women who get breast cancer are younger than age 50. Black women can play a key role in their own future by getting regular screenings!

Women who have an abnormal breast or cervical screening may qualify for Oklahoma Cares. That program helps women who are uninsured or are not covered for breast and cervical cancer. Oklahoma Cares helps diagnose and treat those cancers and precancerous conditions. Women are admitted to the program after being screened under the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, also known as the Take Charge! program in Oklahoma. You can find a Take Charge! screener by calling the Oklahoma State Department of Health at 1-866-550-5585.

Know your risks and make sure you follow through on screenings so you can lead a healthier life!

Si usted quiere leer este artículo en español, visite la página web del OHCA al <http://www.okhca.org/sooner-care.companion>.

Disclaimer: Clinical, legal and other comments are offered for general information only. Please talk to your doctor about specific health concerns.

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