

SOONERCARE

Inside

Help! I'm bored!
Medicine at school
Living Choice offers a way back home
Those insects can really bug you
SoonerCare covers device to
avoid pregnancy
V is for vaccinations

Soon you will be able to renew your SoonerCare benefits online! Watch for more information in the mail.



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.

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Oklahoma Health Care Authority
2401 NW 23rd St.
Suite A-1
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
www.okhca.org



COMPANION

RETURNING TO SCHOOL: A NEW START

As summer vacation winds down, kids start thinking about going back to school. This time of year gives parents a special chance to become more involved in their child's emotional life.

Some children have fears about going back to school. They worry about having new teachers and making new friends. Some children are scared about having to face other kids who have bullied or humiliated them. Others are nervous about going into another grade or a different school. Some kids also feel pressure to do well in school – or fear they won't. "This year I will make straight As," they think. Or, "I know I will fail math."

As a parent, you can do a lot to create a positive attitude about the new school year. You can help your child prepare mentally and emotionally for what's coming. You also can work with your child to set up new routines for bedtime, homework and meals.

Here are some easy ways you can help your children get ready to go back to school:

- Tell your children how proud you are that they are going back to school. Remind them it is great to learn new skills!
- Stress how important a good education is. Tell them stories about how learning helps them succeed in life.
- Go over the classes your children are going to take. Show your excitement about everything they



are going to learn.

• Talk over ways to handle difficult situations. Make a plan about what your child will do if something unpleasant happens during the school day.

• Tell your children you will help when something is bothering them.

• Let your children know that even if they don't like a new teacher, they will still be able to learn important information.

• Take your children to meet new teachers and see their new classrooms.

• Take your child to any "back to school" activities that the school offers.

• Let your children know that you will be meeting from time to time with their teachers. Tell them you want to know what is going on at school!

• Support your children's interest in activities. If they have a game, concert or contest, try to attend. Even if you can't go, make sure they get to tell you all the details later.

School is going to be the center of your child's life for the next nine months or more. You can help make it an exciting and satisfying adventure!

Help! I'm bored!



Parents and caregivers dread hearing, ***“I’m bored. There’s nothing to do.”*** Bored children will find something to do, but it may not be on their parents’ list of recommended activities. The next time your kids are restless, try one of these activities:

- With your finger, trace a design on your child’s back. See if she can tell what it is. If your child can read, try spelling out words. Draw slowly, and give your child a turn to draw on your back.
- If your child can read, use a mirror to reverse the words in a magazine article. See if your child can read it backwards.
- Play finger pool. Scrunch a piece of paper into a small ball. Take turns flicking it back and forth across the kitchen table, or find a place to play and move the game outdoors.
- Take a walk together, and collect sticks and stones. Later, sort the sticks and stones by size, laying out the largest, the next largest, etc.
- Make paper airplanes. See how far you can get them to fly.
- Make a wish list. Everyone should know that wishes don’t always come true, but it’s fun to do anyway.
- Cut up old magazines, and paste pictures onto newspaper. It makes a mess, and kids love it.
- Make your own recording. Sing songs into a cassette tape. Grandparents especially appreciate receiving such a tape.
- Use blankets, sheets and clothespins to make tents. Let children have a snack and take a nap in the tent.
- Read a book. It sounds revolutionary, but it cures boredom every time.

Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care - NNCC. Douglas, R. (1995). Help! I’m bored! In Todd, C.M. (Ed.), **Child care connections**, 4(5), Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.

Ask the Tooth Fairy

HEALTHY SNACKS FOR AFTER SCHOOL



Q: What are some healthy, after-school snacks that are good for kids and their teeth, too?

A: There are lots of tasty (yes, tasty!) snacks that are good for children – and adults, as well. Here are just a few:

Fresh fruits:

- Bananas
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Melons (honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon)
- Strawberries

Fresh veggies:

- Carrots
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers

Low-fat cheeses:

- Mozzarella
- Cheddar

Low-fat yogurt

Did you know you can freeze grapes, bananas and strawberries? They are delicious to eat frozen and great when it’s hot outside! Also, low-fat yogurt is tastier with fresh fruit added. Get creative! Involve your kids in making up healthy choices.

Remember: Kids learn by watching others, so set a good example by eating healthy snacks.

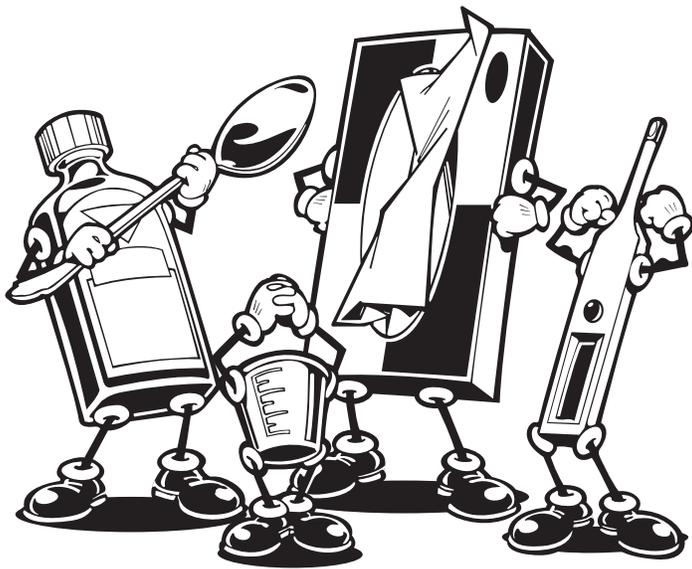


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and
www.okhca.org/twitter.

Don’t forget to keep your address updated with SoonerCare! Call the Helpline at 1-800-987-7767 if you have moved so we can keep you updated on your benefits.

Mow, mow, mow the lawn ... safely!

While you're working your way through grass and weeds, here are some ways to avoid cutting anything you don't intend to – like eyes and toes:



Follow the rules for medicine at school

Some children need to take medicine during the school day. Follow these steps to make sure your child stays safe:

Before the school year starts, contact the school nurse or principal and ask about the school's rules on giving medicines. Find out how medicines are stored and who will give them to your child. For example, Oklahoma City Public Schools' policy states that the medicine must be kept in the original pharmacy package and will be given to students by a nurse, principal or designated school employee.

Most schools require parents to give the school a written request or fill out certain forms before the school can give medicine to a student. The written request should include: the student's name, the name and strength of the drug, how and when the medicine is taken, the reason for taking the medicine, and any other special needs involving the medicine.

Parents should take the medicine directly to the school nurse or office. It should be in its original labeled package from the pharmacy. Do not send medicine with children unless they have approval from the doctor and the school to take it without adult supervision.

Teach your child medication safety. Be sure that your child knows what his or her medicine looks like and how often it should be taken. This will help make sure that your child is getting the right medicine and dose at school. Tell your child to **NEVER** share medicine with other children or take another child's medicine.

- Try to use a mower with a control that stops it from moving forward if you let go of the handle.
- Children younger than age 16 should not be allowed to use ride-on mowers. Children younger than age 12 should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up things from the lawn before mowing begins. Anyone who mows should wear hearing and eye protection.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary. Carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads or other areas.
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers.

Information courtesy American Academy of Pediatrics

Generic drugs make sense

Sometimes people wonder if generic drugs work as well as brand-name drugs. The answer is yes! The Food and Drug Administration, better known as the FDA, makes sure that generic drugs are safe and effective.

What are generic drugs?

A generic drug is the same as a brand-name drug in dosage, safety, strength, quality, performance and intended use. It may be a different color or shape than the brand-name drug. Today, more than half of all prescriptions are filled with generic drugs.

Are generic drugs as safe as brand-name drugs? Do they work as well?

Yes. The FDA looks at all drugs to make sure that they are safe and that they work. Since a generic drug uses the same active ingredients and is shown to work the same way in the body, it has the same benefits and risks as the brand-name version of the same drug.

Why do generic drugs cost less?

Generic drugs cost less because generic drug makers don't have to spend as much money on research and advertising as the company that invented the drug. Also, more than one company can make the same generic drug, so they have to compete on price.

Does every brand-name drug have a generic?

No. When a new drug is approved by the FDA, it is sold only as a brand-name drug for the first several years. This allows the company that invented the drug to earn back the costs of research and advertising. Later, other drug companies can sell generic versions of the same drug, but only after they have been approved by the FDA.

Did you know that SoonerCare has a list of generic drugs that don't require a co-pay at the pharmacy?

Not only do generic drugs make sense, but they can save you cents, too. When your doctor is writing a prescription, it's usually a good idea to ask if there is a generic drug that would work for you. If you have questions about your current medications, talk to your doctor or pharmacist to discuss switching to generic drugs.

The SoonerCare list of \$0 co-pay generic drugs is available on the OHCA website at www.okhca.org/ZeroCopayGenerics.



Living Choice offers a way back home

If you know someone on SoonerCare who has been living in a long-term care facility, they may have a chance to go home and still get the care they need.

Through the state's Living Choice project, SoonerCare members who are at least 19 years old and have lived in a nursing home for at least six months now have the option of moving to a community setting. They must have qualified for SoonerCare for at least one month before the transition.

Living Choice allows exactly what the program's title says. Money that usually helps pay for someone's care in a nursing home now follows people to their home in the community. They still receive nursing assistance. They also can get help with setting up normal living expenses, such as apartment security deposits and initial utility expenses.

For more information about whether you or someone you know may qualify, to make a referral or more information, visit

www.oklivingchoice.org

or call a Living Choice representative at 1-888-287-2443.



Those insects can really bug you

You can find insects almost anywhere you go, but this time of year tends to bring out mosquitos and several kinds of stinging insects. Here are some ways to protect yourself and your children:



- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or gather. Some examples are stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- Avoid dressing in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- To remove a visible stinger from skin, gently back it out by scraping it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail.
- Don't use products that combine sunscreen and insect repellent. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but the insect repellent should not be reapplied.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET when needed to prevent insect-related diseases. This is especially important if you will be around ticks, which can transmit Lyme Disease, and mosquitoes, which can transmit West Nile Virus and other viruses.
- The current recommendation for children over 2 months old is to use products that contain 10 percent to 30 percent DEET. DEET should not be used on children under 2 months of age.
- DEET is about as effective at 10 percent and 30 percent, but there's a big difference in how long it keeps bugs away. At 10 percent, DEET provides protection for about two hours. At 30 percent, it lasts for about five hours. Choose the lowest concentration that will cover the length of time you need protection.
- The concentration of DEET varies a lot from product to product, so read the label of any product you purchase.
- Children should wash off repellents when back indoors.

Information courtesy American Academy of Pediatrics

Plan ahead for sun safety

Did you know that just a few serious sunburns can raise your child's risk of skin cancer later in life?

UV rays in sunlight damage the skin. They can reach you on cloudy and hazy days, as well as bright and sunny days. Kids don't have to be at the pool, beach or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful UV rays whenever they're outdoors.

The most important way to protect your family's skin is to use sunscreen. Anyone who spends time outdoors during the day needs to use sunscreen, regardless of skin type. Babies younger than 6 months should not be out in direct sunlight. They burn more easily, and their skin is more fragile. If your baby does have to be out in the sun, use a small amount of sunscreen on exposed areas, such as hands, face and ears.

How to choose a sunscreen

All sunscreen products include an SPF, or sun protection factor. The SPF of a sunscreen measures the amount of protection from UV rays. The higher the SPF, the greater the protection. However, you shouldn't rely on sunscreen to decide how long your skin is safe in the sun. Don't count on "redness" of your skin to tell you, either. It may take up to 24 hours for sunburns to fully develop.

When buying sunscreen, find one with an SPF of at least 15 that blocks **both UVA and UVB rays**. You should choose sunscreens that are "water-resistant" or "sweat-resistant." While all sunscreens wash off to some extent, these products don't wash off as easily in water or when sweating heavily.

How to apply sunscreen

Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors, and use plenty of it! Put on more sunscreen every two hours, or sooner if needed. Be sure to cover all exposed skin. Use sunscreen even on cloudy or hazy days, because UV rays can go through cloud cover.

Other steps to take for sun protection

Although sunscreen is important, it can't block out all UV rays. That's why it's important to take other steps to protect your family from the sun. You should limit time in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest. Sunglasses, hats, baseball caps, tightly woven clothing (lightweight long pants and long-sleeved shirts), tents or umbrellas also protect you.

SoonerCare covers long-term device to avoid pregnancy



Women on SoonerCare have many choices for pregnancy prevention. One of the longer-term options is Implanon. This device is placed under the skin of the upper arm and stays for about three years. It puts out a hormone that does not let you get pregnant and works about 99 percent of the time.

Implanon is easy for your doctor to put in, but you might see some common side effects. Some of these include irregular bleeding, headaches, weight gain, acne, tender breasts and pain where it was placed. Serious problems are blood clots to the lungs and brain, and heart problems – especially in women who smoke.

SoonerCare pays for putting in the device and taking it out every three years. We will only pay the doctor for taking out the device before three years if there is a serious medical problem with Implanon.

SoonerCare will not pay the doctor when the device is removed for your convenience or for a minor side effect such as irregular bleeding or mild headaches. If you wish to remove it for those reasons, you will have to pay the doctor. The doctor might have you sign a form called an Advanced Beneficiary Notice. The form says that you have to pay the doctor to remove the device and why. Please talk with your doctor about the device and the chance that you might have to pay if the device is taken out earlier than usual.



A new study in Pediatrics shows that while cigarettes remain the most common tobacco products eaten by children, next on the list are smokeless tobacco products. Researchers think this may be because some tobacco products look a lot like mints or other candy typically eaten by children. However, these mints are packed with nicotine and can poison kids.

The study primarily discusses Camel Orbs. These are pellets of finely ground tobacco with mint or cinnamon flavoring that dissolve in the mouth just like regular breath mints and look like Tic Tacs or M&Ms. While their appearance can attract a child's curiosity, eating one could be deadly for a little one.

The study found that Camel Orbs had an extremely high level of absorbability. The study also found 13,705 reports to the nation's poison control centers of kids under age 6 eating tobacco products of all sorts. Those complaints included 1,768 related to smokeless products.

If adults choose to use this form of tobacco, they need to make sure not to leave this potentially deadly "candy" within a child's reach.

SoonerCare members age 12 and older may qualify for the tobacco cessation benefit. It offers counseling and tobacco cessation medicine and aids. Talk to your PCP about this benefit and how you may qualify.

You can also contact the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW. They can assist you with your quit attempt and provide you with patches or gum.



Get FREE messages each week on your cell phone to help you through your pregnancy and baby's first year at Text4baby. Text BABY to 511411. Text4baby is an educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

Soozie and Rascal Go Camping

Camping is lots of fun at a park or in the backyard as long as no one gets hurt!

Play it safe this summer!

1. Never go near a grill or fire unless there is a grown-up watching you. Stand back so you don't get burned.
2. Wear a life jacket and never go swimming alone or without a grown-up watching.
3. Always wear a helmet when riding a bike or scooter.
4. Wear sunscreen when going outdoors. Sunburns hurt.
5. Wear kid-safe insect repellent outdoors. Bug bites are no fun!

Make a nature book and add to it all summer.

1. Cut two pieces of cardboard (use the inside of a cereal box or shoe box) for the front and back of your book. Cut a round hole near the top and bottom of the left edge.
2. Cut several pieces of white paper the same size. Trace the holes from the cover onto the paper. Use a hole punch or scissors to cut out the holes.
3. Stack all the paper between the covers and tie with yarn or heavy twine.
4. Write your name on the front and decorate.



Each time you go camping, go on a walk or play outside, look for something to add to your nature book. You can draw pictures of things you see and write about what you did. Make rubbings of leaves, bark or shells by placing them under the paper and rubbing a flat crayon over the top. Glue or tape flat leaves or flowers to pages. Make notes about the time of day, the weather and where you found the plant, bug or special item. Try to have a very thick book by the end of summer!



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 website. 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.

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!

Oklahoma Health Care Authority
 2401 NW 23rd St.
 Suite A-1
 Oklahoma City, OK 73107
 www.okhca.org



V is for vaccinations

The Oklahoma State Health Department recommends the following shots:

CHILD CARE	PRESCHOOL/PRE-K	K-11th	12th
4 DTaP	4 DTaP	5 DTP/DTaP/Td/Tdap	5 DTP/DTaP/Td/Tdap
1-4 PCV			
3 Polio	3 Polio	4 Polio	4 Polio
1 MMR	1 MMR	2 MMR	2 MMR
1-4 Hib			
3 Hep B	3 Hep B	2-3 Hep B	2-3 Hep B
2 Hep A	2 Hep A	2 Hep A	2 Hep A
1 Varicella	1 Varicella	1 Varicella	

Summer is in full bloom! But kiddos will be going back to school before you know it. Make sure that your children get all their required shots or vaccinations before school starts.

Please talk with your children’s PCP about what shots are appropriate for their ages. Ask when your children should get shots, and make appointments to get them.

Be sure to keep the appointments!

School-aged children need shots to protect them from diseases. The reason all children must be vaccinated is because it helps keep them from getting each other sick with serious illnesses. Shots cut the chance of infection and outbreaks in schools and communities because more people are protected.

Si usted quiere leer este artículo en español, visite la pagina 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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