

SOONERCARE

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COMPANION

Cough, cough, sneeze!



Let's have some safe medicine, please!

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 primary care provider (PCP) before giving him or her any medicine, and be sure not to give aspirin unless your PCP says to. Antibiotics are not recommended for colds.

If your child's PCP 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 that is packaged with the child's medicine. This might be a dropper, dosing cup or dosing spoon. 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. Read the labels to track the total amount given.

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 (salt water) nose drops can help clear thick mucus from a runny nose.
- A rubber nose bulb can help clear congestion.
- Give them chicken soup or broth (yes, your grandmother was right) and lots of liquids like water, juice, electrolyte solutions and milk.

 If you need to find or change your doctor, you can find a list of SoonerCare providers at www.okhca.org under "Individuals." You can also call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767 for help or to request a provider directory.

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.

Winter 2010

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





Why do teeth become sensitive?

Your teeth are covered on the outside with enamel. Enamel protects the sensitive part of your teeth (dentin) from things like heat, cold and sour food. If something happens to the enamel – like a tooth cracks or you get a cavity – the dentin is exposed. The nerve endings that cause you to feel sensations are not protected. That’s what causes sensitivity.

How do cavities form?

The germs in your mouth and the food remaining on your teeth make a thick, sticky, see-through layer. This is called dental plaque. If you brush and floss your teeth, it removes plaque. But if the plaque is not removed, it attaches to your teeth. The bacteria multiply, releasing mild acids that attack the tooth. This destroys the enamel, layer by layer. The bacteria slowly dig deeper into the tooth. The decayed part of the tooth becomes weak. It can break as you chew. That’s where a cavity comes from. The best ways to avoid cavities are to brush, floss and see your dentist for regular checkups.

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www.okhca.org/facebook
 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.

When you start feeling sick, it can be hard to tell if you are getting a cold or the flu. This is important to figure out, because if you have the flu, it is better to act fast. If you think you or your family member has the flu, contact your PCP right away (within 12 to 48 hours).

Flu symptoms usually come on quickly, within three to six hours. They include fever, body aches, dry cough, and extreme tiredness. Cold symptoms are less severe. People often have a stuffy nose, a cough that brings up mucus or blood, slight tiredness, and limited body aches.

Colds are mainly a disease of the nose. Flu is mainly a disease of the lungs. This chart can help you decide if your symptoms are a cold or the flu.



**COLD
OR
THE FLU
?**



| Symptoms | Cold | Flu |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Fever | Rare | Usually present |
| Aches | Slight | Usual; often severe |
| Chills | Uncommon | Fairly common |
| Tiredness | Mild | Moderate to severe |
| Sudden symptoms | Symptoms appear gradually | Symptoms can appear within 3-6 hours |
| Coughing | Hacking cough that brings up mucus or blood | Dry cough |
| Sneezing | Common | Uncommon |
| Stuffy nose | Common | Uncommon |
| Sore throat | Common | Uncommon |
| Chest discomfort | Mild to moderate | Often Severe |
| Headache | Uncommon | Common |

One important thing you can do to stay healthy is get a flu shot. A flu shot is a vaccine that greatly cuts your chances of getting the flu. Flu shots are suggested for everyone older than 6 months of age.



God rest ye, merry SoonerCare members

The holiday season can be a joyous time for many, but more than 80 percent of people find the holiday season between Halloween and New Year's Day "slightly or very stressful."

Here are some ways to keep your stress level to a minimum:

- ❖ **God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen.** Make sure to take care of yourself during this busy holiday season. Stay rested and eat well-balanced meals. Don't overindulge in unhealthy sweets and alcoholic drinks. Deep breathing exercises and physical activities are excellent ways to de-stress. Consider some of life's simple pleasures, such as snuggling up to read a good book, listening to music and knitting. It's healthy to have a **Silent Night** during the holiday season!
- ❖ **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.** It's OK to acknowledge uncomfortable feelings during the holidays, too. The season may bring up some sad or anxious feelings, depending on your past. It's quite normal to have those feelings resurface if **Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer**.
- ❖ **We Three Kings.** If the holidays become overly stressful, seek out a positive support system. Seek out a friend, family member or pastor for support.

You may find it useful and comforting to attend a religious or social event, such as a **Sleigh Ride** with friends.

- ❖ **I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus.** Try to put aside conflicts with family and friends during the holiday season. Set a goal to be more tolerant of others! Make an effort to be like **Jolly Old Saint Nicholas** during the season. Remember that others are probably stressed, too!
- ❖ **Deck the Halls.** Keep to your budget while doing your holiday shopping. Don't get caught buying costly **Christmas Shoes** and end up living **Away in the Manger** because you couldn't pay your rent or mortgage.

Finally, if you aren't able to handle the stresses of the holidays, please know that behavioral health services are available through SoonerCare. Contact the Behavioral Health Department at 1-800-652-2010 for a referral for counseling or other treatment services.



Budgeting can leave a little jingle in your wallet



While Santa is making his list of "naughty and nice," the rest of us can make another list focusing on budget and price.

If you want to enjoy the holidays without stressing over how much everything costs, you can start that list now. Make a plan and stick to it!

First things first: Make a list of gifts you need to buy. Put the amount that you would **like** to spend next to each name. Once you're done, add up the amounts for a total. If this is a good number, then you have a starting point. If not, go through the list again and adjust the amounts to fit what you can afford.

If you have children, you can go through holiday ads together. Direct your kids to items that are within your budget. Make it fun, and you will be giving them an important tool they will always be able to use!

Homemade gifts can be great presents, too. Let your kids make ornaments. They can cut out holiday shapes from construction paper and finish them with clear sticky shelf paper and a yarn hanger. They can even make angels out of pasta, spray-painted white. These gifts from their little hands can be cherished for years to come.

A no-sew fleece scarf is also a great homemade gift. You can buy fleece on sale, and there are many colors and designs to choose from. Cut the fleece about 6 inches wide and from 45 to 54 inches long. Cut 1-inch-wide slits about 4 inches deep on each end to finish the scarf.

Gifts have become an important part of the holidays, but it's really the memories that you will talk about for years to come. So, make a plan, make it fun and have a Christmas that you and your children will remember and love.

Know your risk for gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that develops, or is first seen, during pregnancy. Having gestational diabetes doesn't mean that you had diabetes before you got pregnant, or that you will have diabetes after giving birth. Pregnant women who have never had diabetes before but who have high blood sugar levels during pregnancy are said to have gestational diabetes. It affects about 4 percent of pregnant women in the United States.

Before becoming pregnant, you should talk to your PCP about ways to cut your risk of developing gestational diabetes. You can reduce the risk by being physically active, making healthy food choices and maintaining a healthy weight before getting pregnant.

If you are pregnant and you develop gestational diabetes, you can manage it by going to all your prenatal visits. Regular visits allow your PCP to notice any changes in your health and treat any problems early. Follow your PCP's advice for controlling your blood sugar. Make healthy food choices, and stay physically active throughout your pregnancy. If you are unsure of what healthy food choices to make or what you can do to stay physically active, ask your PCP to refer you to a dietitian or nutritionist.

You are at greater risk for gestational diabetes if you:

- Had a previous pregnancy with gestational diabetes.
- Had a baby born weighing more than 9 pounds.
- Are overweight or obese.
- Are age 25 or older.
- Have a family history of diabetes.
- Are black, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
- Are being treated for HIV.

Dangers associated with gestational diabetes include:

- The mother is at greater risk for developing type 2 diabetes.
- The mother is more likely to have a large baby, which can cause discomfort during late pregnancy and could also require a C-section (and a longer recovery).
- Large babies are more likely to suffer from birth trauma.
- Newborns may have very low blood glucose levels at birth. They also are at higher risk for breathing problems.
- Babies with excess insulin become children who are at risk for obesity and adults who are at risk for type 2 diabetes.

Most women are screened for gestational diabetes at 24-28 weeks. Your PCP might screen you earlier if there are any concerns or if you are at higher risk. Talk to your SoonerCare PCP about gestational diabetes at your next prenatal visit.



Electronic cigarettes are tubes, shaped like cigarettes, that run on batteries. They turn nicotine-laced liquid into a vapor mist that allows people to take in nicotine. E-cigarette users believe this is a safe form of tobacco that will help them stop smoking, but health officials don't agree.

The Food and Drug Administration and other public health experts are worried that instead of helping smokers quit the habit, e-cigarettes could instead increase nicotine addiction and tobacco use, especially among young adults.

The FDA has tested a few of the devices. They found known cancer-causing agents and toxic chemicals found in regular cigarettes. The FDA is also concerned because they have not tested or approved e-cigarettes. They don't know if e-cigarettes and the liquid inside are safe.

There is no safe alternative to tobacco products. The best way a smoker can protect him- or herself from the dangers of tobacco is to quit smoking. If you are a SoonerCare member age 12 or older who wants to quit smoking, you can get free counseling and medication to help you.

Make an appointment with your PCP today or call the SoonerCare Helpline at 800-987-7767 for more information.

Stopping smoking is difficult, but many people succeed in stopping. **You** can stop smoking.



Are you here to see the doctor? Nurse? PA?

It takes a village of health professionals to handle SoonerCare members' needs

When you schedule a visit with your “doctor,” you sometimes may see someone besides your physician.

Here are some of the types of medical professionals you may run into:

- **Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).** LPNs have completed a one-year program that covers basic nursing skills. They provide direct patient care. They also provide support for RNs, whose tasks involve more complex care plans.
- **Registered Nurse (RN).** RNs often act as the “middlemen” between patient and doctor. They must have four years of training and education to get their license. These are the nurses who monitor vital signs, administer fluids and medications, and talk with your PCP when you call about urgent needs.
- **Physician Assistant (PA).** Physician assistants are licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. In some rural areas where physicians are in short supply, PAs serve as PCPs. They confer with their supervising physicians and other medical professionals as needed and required by law. Most PA programs take two years to complete, and they must pass a national certifying exam. Some PAs have bachelor’s or master’s degrees.
- **Nurse Practitioner or Advanced Practice Nurse.** These nurses have specialized knowledge. They can serve patients on their own, but most consult with a physician. It takes from five to 10 years to complete the master’s degree or doctorate in these fields. They represent four specialties: nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists.



Chili for a chilly day

There’s nothing like having something warm from the pot when the air outside is turning cold.

This recipe is good for you, with lean meat and plenty of fiber, and inexpensive to make. But it’s even better at smelling and tasting really yummy! Try serving it over cooked macaroni.

- 🍏 In large sauce pan, cook turkey and onions in margarine until turkey is browned and no longer pink in color (about nine minutes). Drain; return turkey and onions to pan.
- 🍏 Add all remaining ingredients, except the cheese, to turkey mixture. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 🍏 Uncover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 🍏 Sprinkle three tablespoons of cheese over each serving of chili.

Turkey Chili

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 lb. ground turkey | 2 tsp. dry mustard |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup onion, minced | 15½-ounce can of red kidney beans, drained |
| 2 Tbsp. margarine | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pearl barley 6-ounce can of tomato paste |
| 3 cups water | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pearl barley |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 1 Tbsp. chili powder | |
| 1 Tbsp. dry parsley flakes | |
| 1 tsp. paprika | |

Recipe courtesy Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, U.S. Department of Agriculture

High five!

Simple steps can help kids keep off extra weight

"Let's move!"

That's the battle cry in the federal government's war on childhood obesity. The Let's Move program wants to help kids born today to grow up healthy. They also want to give kids a good chance to being at a good weight when they reach adulthood.

Take a look at these five simple steps to success:

1. Move every day!

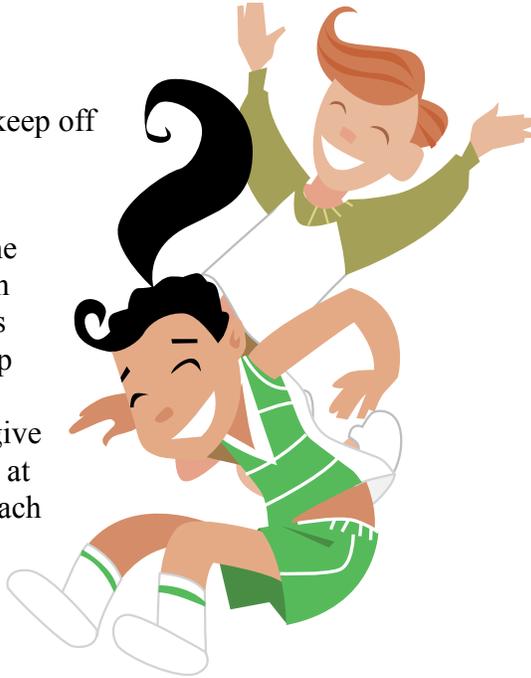
Kids need 60 minutes of active play every day. It may sound like a lot, but it doesn't all need to happen at one time. Kids who get moving tend to feel less stressed and better about themselves. They sleep better and are better prepared to learn in school. And all that activity helps them build healthy bones, muscles and joints.

2. Try a new fruit or veggie.

Bodies need nutrients from food to grow up healthy. Just as cars need gasoline to run, your body needs food to keep going. But not just *any* food. To be your healthiest, you need to give your body the right kinds and amounts of fuel.

Have fun with fruit! Try all the different varieties of apples, or make a fruit salad of several different kinds of fruit. Try fruits you've never tasted before. Blend fruit, juice and yogurt to make a healthy shake.

You also should vary your veggies. Kids' bodies need the vitamins, minerals and fiber from vegetables. Snack on sticks (carrot, red pepper and celery).



Make a salad with as many different colors as you can. Order veggie pizza. Try eating what's in season.

3. Drink lots of water.

Reach for a tall glass of water instead of soda or sugary drinks. You can make water exciting by adding a splash of juice or a slice of lemon, lime, cucumber or watermelon. If you drink juice, make sure it's pure juice with no added sugar. Try to drink 1 percent or skim milk instead of whole milk. And if you have a soda for a treat, have the small size.

4. Do jumping jacks to break up TV time.

The average kid spends more time watching TV and less time running and playing. Kids need to run and play every day. Quiet time for reading and homework is fine, but you should limit time spent watching TV, playing video games or surfing the web so you have more time to play!

If you're going to watch TV or play

computer games, break it up! Pause the game. Make commercial breaks **Let's Move** breaks. Things you can do during breaks include jumping jacks, dancing, running up and down stairs, sit-ups, stretching,

jogging in place, push-ups, and yoga moves.

5. Let kids help make dinner.

Sit down as a family to plan a menu and enjoy spending time together. Shop together for food. If it's OK with Mom and Dad, kids can help cut up fruits and veggies.

They also can measure and mix ingredients. If they pack their lunch, help them work out a menu for the week with different foods

they like that are good for them.

For more information, visit LetsMove.gov.

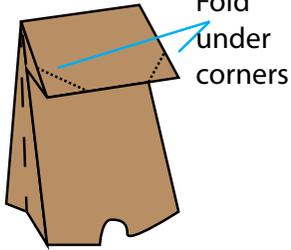
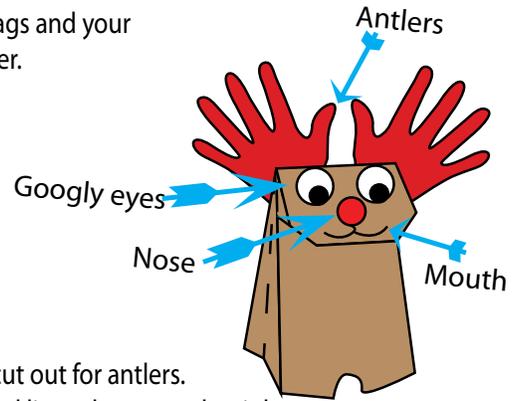


Make a reindeer puppet in time for the holidays!

Make your reindeer puppet with small paper bags and your handprints traced on colored construction paper.

Supplies needed:

- * paper bags
- * color construction paper
- * markers or crayons
- * glue
- * scissors
- * googly eyes - optional

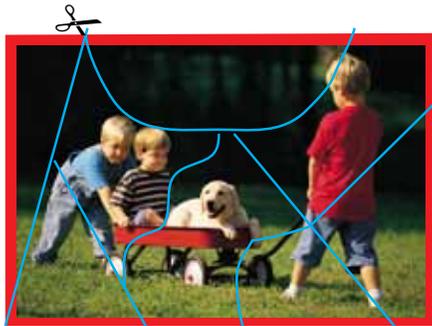


1. Trace two hands on construction paper and cut out for antlers.
2. Fold under the two square points along dotted lines shown on the right.
3. Glue, tape or staple the handprints behind the reindeer's head.
4. Glue googly eyes to "face" or draw and cut out eyes from colored paper and glue to the bag "face."
5. Cut out red circle for nose and glue in place or color.
6. Draw on the mouth. Have fun with your puppet!

Visit Kids Corner

www.okhca.org/kids-corner

Remember, the best thing you can give your child this season is your time and wonderful memories!



Homemade puzzle

- You will need:** picture, cardboard, glue, scissors, storage container.
- Find a large picture of your family or in a magazine.
 - Paste it onto stiff cardboard.
 - Draw lines to cut into jigsaw pieces. For small children, just six or eight pieces will be enough.
 - Cut up the picture and store the pieces in an envelope, zippy bag or small box.

If you are having friends and family visit for the holidays, make a puzzle from a picture collage of the people coming. Write each person's name on their photo. Tell about each person and let your children have fun making the puzzle while learning about the guest.

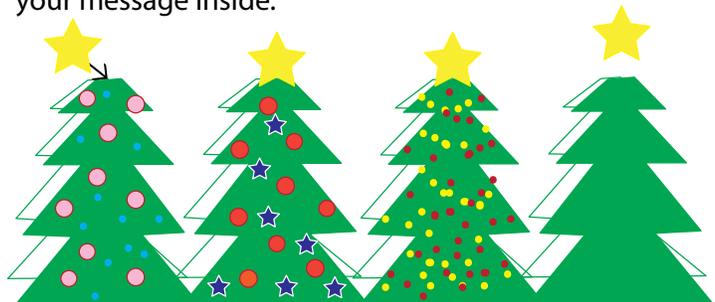
www.okhca.org/kids-corner

Christmas Tree Chain

1. Fold paper in half lengthwise
2. Fold in half again, top edge A to bottom edge B.
3. Fold in half again, top edge C to bottom edge B.
4. Fold in half again, top edge D to bottom edge B.
5. Draw the tree (green lines). Note that the lines go to the fold (black lines) on three sides. Cut out the part shown in blue. You will have a tree shape attached on three sides.

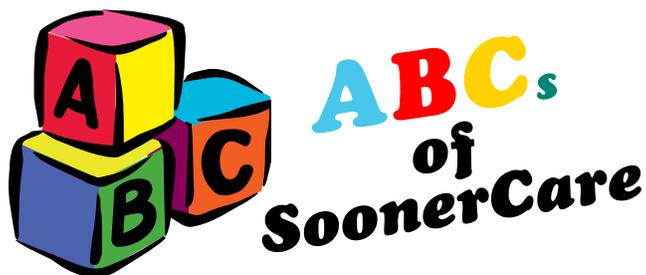
★ Cut out stars to paste on the top of the trees.

Color and decorate your trees any way you want. Set them on the mantle or table to decorate for the holidays. For a special card clip trees apart where they join at the bottom and write your message inside.



Unfold for a chain of trees that are attached at the top so they will stand up.

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



0 is for Online Enrollment

When you get your notice that it's time to re-enroll in SoonerCare, you now have the option to do it online. You'll get immediate results!

Go to mySoonerCare.org to find out if you qualify for another year of SoonerCare benefits (and also other state programs). Re-enrolling online takes as little as five minutes. It lets you renew membership without having a gap in coverage or taking the risk of losing your PCP.

You also can use the site to update any changes in your household information. If you move or change your phone number, let us know so we can reach you with important updates.

MySoonerCare.org
is convenient
and available 24/7
through any
Internet provider.

Si usted quiere leer este artículo en español, visite la pagina web del OHCA al <http://www.okhca.org/soonerCare.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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