

## Keep an “Eye” on Your Vision

OHCA encourages SoonerCare members to keep their eyes healthy and vision clear by taking advantage of their vision benefits and seeing their eye doctor.



SoonerCare has great vision coverage for children covering all vision needs including eye exams and glasses. In adults, SoonerCare covers treatment for eye diseases and injuries. Have your Medical Home recommend an eye doctor.

**Remember, healthy eyes and vision are a critical part of kids’ development.** Their eyes should be examined regularly, as many vision problems and eye diseases can be detected and treated early.

SoonerCare helped 11-year-old member Trajan Burke (photo above) get his vision checked and find the perfect glasses after he complained of headaches.

### Vision Checks from Birth to Five

According to the American Association of Pediatrics:

1. All newborns should have their eyes examined by their physician before leaving the hospital. If any problems are noted, they are then referred to a pediatric ophthalmologist. Premature babies are at increased risk for eye problems and are followed up in the outpatient setting by the pediatric ophthalmologist.
2. At the 6 month visit, the doctor again pays special attention to the eyes. Alignment of the eyes is also carefully noted.
3. At the 3-4 year old visit, the doctor again checks for any abnormalities of the eyes.
4. At the 5 year old visit and older well-child checks, the doctor again carefully examines the eyes as part of the routine physical.



By Sylvia Lopez, M.D.,  
FAAP and OHCA  
Chief Medical Officer

**A special note** about eye problems and learning disabilities: from Dr. Lopez: “when a child has learning problems in school, eye problems are often suspected. Eye problems are almost never the cause for learning disabilities. Vision therapy is not recommended for learning disabilities. Your Medical Home, however, may refer the child to a specialist when learning disabilities are suspected.”

### Signs that a child may have vision problems include:

- Constant eye rubbing
- Extreme light sensitivity
- Poor focusing
- Poor visual tracking (following an object)
- Abnormal alignment or movement of the eyes (after 6 months of age)
- Chronic redness of the eyes
- Chronic tearing of the eyes
- White pupil instead of black

### In school-age children, watch for other signs such as:

- Inability to see objects at a distance
- Inability to read the blackboard
- Squinting
- Difficulty reading
- Sitting too close to the tv
- Watch your child for evidence of poor vision or crossed eyes. If you notice any eye problems, have your child examined immediately so that the problem doesn’t become permanent.

**If caught early, eye conditions often can be reversed.**

# Controlling Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes is high blood sugar (diabetes) that starts or is first diagnosed during pregnancy.

## Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Pregnancy hormones can block insulin from doing its job. When this happens, glucose levels may increase in a pregnant woman's blood.

You are at greater risk for gestational diabetes if you:

- Are older than 25 when you are pregnant
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Gave birth to a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds or had a birth defect
- Have high blood pressure
- Have too much amniotic fluid
- Have had an unexplained miscarriage or stillbirth
- Were overweight before your pregnancy

## Symptoms

Usually there are no symptoms, or the symptoms are mild and not life threatening to the pregnant woman. The blood sugar (glucose) level usually returns to normal after delivery.

Symptoms may include:

- Blurred vision
- Increased urination
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting
- Frequent infections, including those of the bladder, vagina, and skin
- Weight loss despite increased appetite
- Increased thirst

## Signs and tests

Gestational diabetes usually starts halfway through the pregnancy. All pregnant women should receive an oral glucose tolerance test between the 24th and 28th week of pregnancy to screen for the condition. SoonerCare covers the cost of these tests.

## Treatment

The goals of treatment are to keep blood sugar (glucose) levels within normal limits during the pregnancy, and to make sure that the growing baby is healthy.

## Watching your baby

Your Medical Home (MH) doctor should closely check both you and your baby throughout the

pregnancy. Fetal monitoring will check the size and health of the fetus.

## Diet and exercise

The best way to improve your diet is by eating a variety of healthy foods. You should learn how to read food labels, and check them when making food decisions.

Talk to your MH or dietitian if you are a vegetarian or on some other special diet.

In general, when you have gestational diabetes your diet should:

- Be moderate in fat and protein
- Provide your carbohydrates through foods that include fruits, vegetables, and complex carbohydrates (such as bread, cereal, pasta, and rice)
- Be low in foods that contain a lot of sugar, such as soft drinks, fruit juices, and pastries

If managing your diet does not control blood sugar (glucose) levels, you may be prescribed diabetes medicine by mouth or insulin therapy.

Most women who develop gestational diabetes will not need diabetes medicines or insulin, but some will.

## Expectations (prognosis)

Most women with gestational diabetes are able to control their blood sugar and avoid harm to themselves or their baby.

Pregnant women with gestational diabetes tend to have larger babies at birth. This can increase the chance of problems at the time of delivery, including:

Your baby is more likely to have periods of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) during the first few days of life.

Mothers with gestational diabetes have an increased risk for high blood pressure during pregnancy.

## Prevention

Beginning prenatal care early and having regular prenatal visits helps improve your health and the health of your baby. Having prenatal screening at 24 - 28 weeks into the pregnancy will help detect gestational diabetes early.

If you are overweight, decreasing your body mass index (BMI) to a normal range before you get pregnant will decrease your risk of developing gestational diabetes. Try to eat healthier and reduce your intake of sugary foods.

Call your Medical Home if you are pregnant, and you have symptoms of diabetes.

SoonerCare covers all necessary treatment related to gestational diabetes and prenatal care.

## After & Between Pregnancy

### Talk with your health care provider to stay healthy:

- Schedule a **Check-up** with your health care provider within the first month after your baby's birth
  - Even if your baby was born more than a month ago it is still important to see your health care provider
- Follow-up on problems that may have developed during pregnancy like:
  - **Gestational Diabetes**
  - **High Blood Pressure**
- Plan for your family's future by talking about **Birth Control** with your health care provider
- Maintain a healthy weight and keep taking a **Multivitamin** with 400 mcg of folic acid
- Stop **Smoking** or stay quit. Talk with your health care provider or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW

**Preparing  
for a  
Lifetime**  
It's Everyone's Responsibility



## SoonerRide Will Now Take Additional Child Passengers

SoonerRide will now begin taking up to three children to urgent medical appointments. The appointment can be for either a sick child or sick parent.

### The following conditions must apply:

1. The medical appointment must be urgent (to be seen within 24 hours) as determined by the member's doctor. SoonerRide will confirm this with the member's doctor.
2. All children must be the member's by birth, marriage, legal adoption, foster child, or legal guardianship.
3. All additional children (not the patient) must be younger than 13 years of age, unless, the child has complex medical, intellectual or physical disabilities that require constant care and supervision.

4. Each child must have their own car seat, provided by the member, if required, by state law.

Members must make the request for additional child passengers when making the trip reservation. A maximum of three (3) children can ride with their parent/guardian. The total number of passengers, including the driver cannot be more than five (5) for any vehicle.

In order to set up a ride or get a gas reimbursement trip number, please call 877-404-4500 or 711 (TDD).

**\*\*If your ride is 15 minutes late, call "Where's My Ride?" at 800-435-1034 or 711 (TDD).**



Free help

Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline

**1 800**

**784-8669**

**QUIT NOW**

**OKhelpline.com**

# Giving Juice to Your Kids Can Cause Health and Dental Problems

We know that SoonerCare parents want to make the best choices for their children in order to ensure they eat right, stay healthy and have healthy teeth. However, you may be surprised to learn that giving your children fruit juice can actually do a lot more harm than good.

## Fruit juice and sugary drink consumption is one of the leading causes for childhood obesity and tooth decay problems.

Recent studies have confirmed that drinking moderate amounts of 100 percent fruit juice doesn't affect a child's weight. However, fruit juice contains calories. Just like any other food or calorie-containing drink, too much fruit juice can contribute to weight gain and dental issues.

"It is important to limit giving your children juice," said Leon D. Bragg, D.D.S., MEd and OHCA Director of Dental Services. "There is such a strong connection between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (including juices and soda) and child health problems like obesity, and early tooth decay and cavities. I urge parents to follow appropriate guidelines for juice consumption and if you decide to give your child juice-stick with the 100 percent fruit juices."

## Serve juice in a cup — not a bottle — to avoid tooth decay.

While 100 percent fruit juice and sweetened fruit drinks might have a similar number of calories, your child will get more vitamins and nutrients and fewer additives from 100 percent juice.

To ensure that your child isn't drinking too much

juice, follow these limits from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Heart Association:

- Birth to 6 months: No fruit juice, unless it's used to relieve constipation
- 6 months to 6 years: 4 to 6 ounces (118 to 177 milliliters) a day
- 7 years and older: 8 to 12 ounces (237 to 355 milliliters) a day.



## Baby Teeth Are Important!

Tooth decay can develop as soon as the first tooth appears. It's important to care for your child's baby teeth because they act as placeholders for adult teeth. If baby teeth are lost too early, the teeth that are left may move and not leave any room for the adult teeth to come in. And tooth decay in baby teeth can be painful and cause health problems like infections, which can at times be life-threatening. It can also lead to teasing and speech development problems. (healthychildren.org)

**Don't forget SoonerCare covers two dental cleanings a year for children under 21 plus any needed X-rays, fillings and crowns. Make sure to talk to your Medical Home today and get your child in to one of our SoonerCare dentists!**

## Eat Healthy and Live Better OHCA encourages Oklahomans to eat better and to celebrate National Nutrition Month this March—a good time to start a healthy eating plan.

These rules for healthy eating will help you stay healthy. More variety – eat different kinds of foods. This variety helps you get all the nutrients you need.

- Try a new fruit or vegetable.
- Trade healthy recipes with friends.
- More fruits and vegetables: eat more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables give you fiber and many different kinds of vitamins.
- Have fruits and vegetables with every meal. Eat fruits and vegetables for snacks – less fat. Do not eat too much fat. Too much fat can lead to health

problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer.

- Bake or broil foods instead of frying.
- Use low fat milk instead of whole milk.
- Less sugar – do not eat too much sugar. Too much sugar can lead to health problem like obesity, diabetes, and poor teeth. Limit the amount of candy and sweet foods you eat.
- Drink water instead of sodas and fruit drinks.

*(Tips provided by the Florida Literacy Coalition)*

This newsletter is for SoonerCare Choice 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.

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

**SoonerCare Helpline**  
800-987-7767 or 711(TDD)

**SoonerRide**  
877-404-4500 or 711(TDD)

**SoonerCare provider list**  
800-987-7767

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

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Download additional copies on the OHCA website <http://www.okhca.org/sooner-care-companion>  
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## Brush up on Oral Health



## Tips from the American Dental Association:

- **Brush your teeth at least twice a day.** Brush for at least two minutes. Set a timer if necessary.
- **Use the proper equipment.** Use a fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush that is A.D.A. approved.
- **Practice good technique.** Hold your toothbrush at a slight angle against your teeth and brush with short back-and-forth motions.
- **Keep your equipment clean.** Always rinse your toothbrush with warm water after brushing. Store it in an upright position, if possible, and allow it to air dry until using it again.
- **Know when to replace your toothbrush.** Invest in a new toothbrush or a replacement head for your electric or battery-operated toothbrush every three to four months — or sooner if the bristles become frayed.
- **Floss one tooth at a time.** Use your thumbs and forefingers to gently pull the floss from the gumline to the top of the tooth to scrape off plaque. Rub the floss against all sides of the tooth. Unwind to fresh floss as you progress to the next tooth.



## We Want to Hear Your Story

Below are quotes from current and former SoonerCare members about the positive impact that access to quality health care has had in their lives. We hope you too will share your stories! Whether a life-saving medical treatment or the opportunity to receive routine medical care for your child, we want to hear how SoonerCare made a difference in your life.

*"Piper is now back home with us (her parents), and her diabetes is under control. The treatments have not slowed down from being an inquisitive happy child, and I have nothing but praise for the OHCA SoonerCare outreach program."*

**Barbara Johnson (Wilburton)**

*"If I hadn't found out about SoonerCare, I am not sure that I would have gotten the quality of prenatal care that I needed because*

*I simply couldn't afford it."*

**Daryn Kirkpatrick (Moore)**

*"I couldn't do it without SoonerCare and all the medical treatment they provide for Jason. SoonerCare has helped me and him tremendously."*

**Doris (Oklahoma City)**

*"SoonerCare, thank you for assisting us in meeting the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of our daughters who — through no fault of their own — were traumatized before they were ever born."*

**Karen Poteet (Oklahoma City)**

Visit our website at [www.okhca.org/tellus](http://www.okhca.org/tellus) to see the full stories and numerous others. While you are there, share "your story" with us! Whether it's a quote of how SoonerCare helped you and/or your child or share a full story on how SoonerCare saved a life.



## Simple remedies often best for common colds in young children

*It's late and your child is awake with a cough.*

### *What's a tired parent to do?*

Following are tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to help calm your young child's cough and cold symptoms so the whole house can sleep soundly.

#### **Honey**

Honey can be fed safely to children over age 1, according to the AAP Nutrition Handbook. The AAP does not recommend giving honey to infants under 12 months of age because it could contain a bacterium that causes infant botulism. The AAP advises starting with ½ to 1 teaspoon as needed. If honey is not available, corn syrup may be used.

#### **Saline solution**

Saline solution offers a way to keep the tiniest noses clear. Babies can benefit from nasal washes prior to nursing or bottle feeding. Make saline solution by combining ½ teaspoon of table salt per 1 cup of warm tap water. Put two to three drops in the nostril and use a bulb syringe to suction it out.

Older children also can gargle saline solution to ease sore throats.

#### **Vapor rubs**

For children older than age 2, topical vapor rubs can help ease chest and nose congestion. Vapor rub containing camphor, menthol and eucalyptus oils relieves symptoms and aids sleep in children with colds.

Rubs never should be given by mouth or rubbed under the nose. Follow instructions on the label and rub on the chest.

#### **Medical Home**

Consult your pediatrician if your child's symptoms last longer than a week, he or she has a mild fever for more than two to three days (call your MH right away if your infant under 2 months has a fever), your child has severe ear pain that does not go away or has a sore throat accompanied by fever and swollen neck.

**childrenwww.aapnews.org**

## Allergy Triggers and Prevention Tips

Spring is a time of year when pollen, mold, and dust can cause allergy problems for many people. Allergy symptoms include sneezing, coughing, itchy eyes, and runny nose. Everyone knows that allergies can make you uncomfortable, but they can also be a serious problem for people with asthma, because they often make asthma symptoms worse.

The main trigger of springtime allergies is pollen, which is a tiny grain released in the air by trees, grass, and weeds. The higher the pollen count, the more likely you are to have allergy symptoms. If anyone in your family has allergies, these tips may help:

- Avoid outdoor activity when pollen count is high

**If your allergies persist or become severe, call your Medical Home to schedule a checkup.**

- Keep windows closed to keep pollen outside
- Wash bed sheets regularly in hot water to avoid dust that may collect
- Avoid rugs, throw pillows, and heavy drapes that may hold dust or pollen
- Restrict pets to certain areas of the home to control pet dander
- Clean showers and bathtubs regularly to avoid indoor mold
- Clean or change air filters regularly to avoid pollen build-up
- Wash your hair after being outside to remove pollen that may collect
- Wear a mask when using the vacuum
- Vacuum or mop the floor regularly to pick up any dust, animal dander, or mold

# A Quick Guide to Diaper Rash

Diaper rash is the irritation of a baby's skin in the area covered by diapers. It can be caused by:



**Diapers should be changed often, and should be changed quickly after soiling.**

- Moisture in the diaper area, especially if a dirty diaper is in contact with the skin for a long time
- Rubbing of the diaper against the skin
- Babies can have an allergy to the diaper itself.
- Babies can also have an allergy to soaps used to wash cloth diapers.
- Diaper rash can also be caused by a yeast or bacterial infection. Yeast infections can happen more often if a baby is taking antibiotics for an illness.

You can help prevent diaper rash by keeping the area dry and clean. Diapers should be changed often, and should be changed quickly after soiling. When changing diapers, avoid rubbing the skin because it can cause more irritation; pat the skin dry instead.

Do not use "baby wipes" that have alcohol or propylene glycol to clean the skin while a diaper rash is present. These may burn the skin and spread bacteria on the skin.

Protect the skin with a product containing zinc oxide or petrolatum like Desitin™ or Boudreaux's Butt Paste™. Products that contain alcohol or fragrances should not be used.

Many babies will still get diaper rash despite doing everything right. Do not be frustrated. This is a common problem that many babies will have. The important thing is to try to prevent it, and to know when to seek help.

You should contact your doctor if the rash worsens after treatment or does not improve after 2-3 days. You should also contact your doctor if your baby has blisters, puss, broken skin, or fever.

## Quick Start Guide

- ◆ **CHOOSE** your doctor; if you have not already done so. If you need help choosing a doctor, visit [www.okhca.gov](http://www.okhca.gov) or call the **SoonerCare Helpline at 800-987-7767**.
- ◆ **CALL** your doctor to set up an initial check-up appointment.
- ◆ **ARRANGE A RIDE** to your appointment by calling SoonerRide. Call **877-404-4500** or **TDD 800-722-0353** for more information. Allow three business days before your appointment to make arrangements.
- ◆ **ASK** your doctor any questions you have about your health or their Medical Home agreements. **Information on MH is at [www.okhca.org/medical-home](http://www.okhca.org/medical-home)**.

## Important reminders about your doctor appointments:

- Take your SoonerCare ID to your appointment.
- **Call your doctor for an appointment as soon as possible if you are sick or need a checkup.**
- Take all your current medicine or a complete list of all prescriptions and over-the-counter medicine you are taking.
- **Make a list of questions to discuss with your doctor.**
- Arrive at your appointment 10 minutes early in case you have to fill out paperwork.
- **Write down your doctor's instructions and answers to your questions while still in the office to make sure you understand and remember all the answers.**
- Prescriptions written by your doctor may be filled at any pharmacy contracted with SoonerCare.
- **If you must cancel your appointment, please call your doctor as soon as possible so another patient can be scheduled for that time.**

## SoonerCare Companion

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



**text4baby**<sup>SM</sup>

A free service of the  
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

**Text BABY to 511411**

## New Hours for SoonerCare Helpline

The SoonerCare Helpline's hours have been extended and now will be open on Saturdays.

New Hours: Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Fridays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The extended and Saturday hours are intended for members who need help with Online Enrollment, Medical Home/PCP changes and answers to basic questions about their SoonerCare benefits. The new hours will be evaluated after a few months to see if they are needed.



# GET SOCIAL with SOONERCARE

Check out OHCA on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.



[okhca.org/socialmedia](http://okhca.org/socialmedia)