



Photo by Jason Lehecka

Katy's Cutest
Kid Lyla Reddix

10

WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY THIS SPRING

Tips to make sure
your child stays
healthy and active

Written by Julie Dold

There's more to keeping your Katy cutie healthy than covering their mouth when they cough. Keeping children physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy are all ways to help shape them into strong adults. *Katy Magazine* has come up with 10 great tips to help your child stay healthy this year. One of the best ways to ensure your child follows these tips is by setting an example yourself. Practicing what you preach is always best.



Healthy Eating

Eating right is one of the most obvious things to do when it comes to staying healthy; however, when parents are running children from soccer practice to ballet, it can almost seem impossible to eat correctly. One of the best ways to encourage healthy eating is by bringing kids along to the grocery store to pick out dinner, and then have them help with the cooking process. "My daughter knows how eating fruits, veggies, whole grains, and lean meats will help her to have more energy to play with her friends and excel at gymnastics," says Denise Prince-Ezell, mother of one. Teaching kids about the food pyramid and the importance of each food group is also very important and helpful.



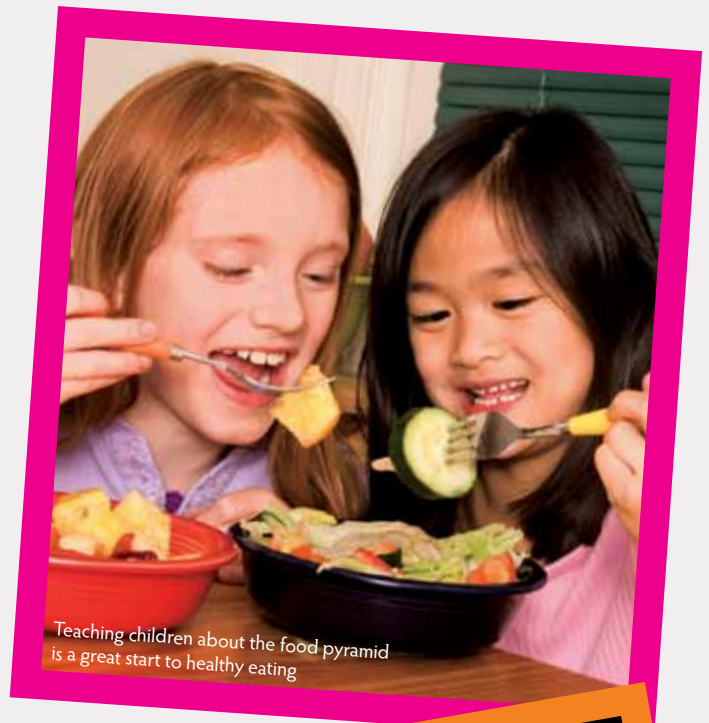
Cleanliness

Maintaining good hygiene is extremely important to staying healthy. Teaching children the importance of hand washing, teeth brushing, and bathing is best maintained when taught at a young age. Children do not realize how many germs they pick up throughout the day, and there are plenty of ways to make hand washing fun. "Sing a song with your child while they wash their hands for fun and encouragement," says Erin Thornberry, business development coordinator at MedCare Pediatric Group. Always be sure to tell children to wash their hands after using the restroom, animal petting, and before eating. Also, if you ask your child to bathe daily so it washes all the germs off, you better be doing so as well. A good role model is key to a successful child.



Exercise /Activity

An active lifestyle is encouraged at any age. Enrolling in a Mommy and Me class is a great way to bond with your child and show them that exercise is important to you, which in turn will help them grow to be more active. "Educate yourself on healthy exercise habits and let your kids know that it's important to eat and drink the things that make their bodies strong," says Paige Jones Harper of The Little Gym. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, children should exercise at least 60 minutes per day. Limiting TV and promoting fun outdoor activities is a great way to get kids up and moving.



Teaching children about the food pyramid is a great start to healthy eating



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Emotional Health

From school to friends to body image, children deal with a wide variety of emotional issues. Staying emotionally healthy is extremely important when growing up. Look out for signs of depression, low self-esteem, and bullying, especially in children 12 and up. Be positive and

encouraging and listen if your child tells you something is wrong. Never write them off just because they are young. The more time you spend together, the more likely you are to notice if something is wrong. "Having an open relationship with your child can go a long way toward your child feeling that he/she can come to you when he/she is struggling," says Dr. Abby Langan of Adult, Child, and Adolescent Psychiatry. If you notice any emotional issues in your child and they won't talk to you, encourage them to talk to a school counselor, pediatric psychiatrist, or psychologist.

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Well-child Checkups and Vaccines

Getting your child vaccinated is a good way to not only keep your child healthy, but also the people around them as well, such as children under 2 months and people with certain medical conditions that are not able to

get vaccines. "The more people who get vaccines, the less likely the disease will be present in the community where it can spread to others," says Dr. Carol Baker, executive director of the Center for Vaccine Awareness and Research at Texas Children's Hospital. To help prevent serious illnesses and ensure your child is healthy, be sure to take them for all their shots and well-child visits. When you visit your pediatrician bring along a list of questions, so you can ensure your child is as healthy as can be.

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Happy Time

Spending quality family time together is extremely important to helping shape a child in a healthy way. If they see how important it is to their parents to make time for them now, they will be encouraged to do the same for family and friends in the future. "We understand that time as a family is

important for our daughter's development as well as our growth as a family unit, so we find a way to make it happen," says Prince-Ezell. Children can help establish family rules, be a part of family meetings, and plan outings together. Also, eating dinner together and asking open-ended questions is a really good way to show your child that you care.

Set aside time to talk with your child about their day and truly listen to any issues they are having



Children should visit the doctor at least seven times for well-child checkups between the ages of 1 and 4



Turn off electronics and remove distractions so your family can connect on a regular basis





Good Night's Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is important at any age but especially for a growing child. The National Sleep Foundation recommends newborns receive 12 to 18 hours, infants 14 to 15 hours, toddlers 12 to 14 hours, preschoolers 11 to 13 hours, school-age children 10 to 11 hours, and teens 8.5

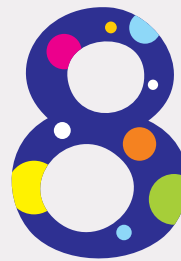
to nine hours. If a child loses out on sleep, more than likely they will be sleepy and cranky throughout the day and not able to focus as easily on daily tasks. By establishing regular bedtimes and following standard bedtime routines, children can count on consistency. Children need sleep to help their bodies cope but also to keep their brains sharp and alert.



Toddlers and preschoolers need 11 to 13 hours of sleep per night



Teaching children good socialization skills helps them become more confident



Socialization Skills

You can begin teaching vital socialization skills the moment children are born. Mothers (and fathers) are encouraged to make eye contact with their newborns during feedings, and hopefully they will maintain that lesson throughout life. Encourage them to make friends at school, during play groups, or any family get-togethers. "I am a big supporter of learning through play," says Margarita Ordonez, mother of one. "I feel it helps in children's social and cognitive development." By socializing with adults, your child's vocabulary increases, their processing skills improve, and they learn how to trust and respect adults. Teaching good socialization skills will help children be more confident than their peers who haven't yet developed these skills.



Healthy Teeth

Teeth brushing and flossing, as well as scheduling that first dental visit, should start as soon as your child's first baby tooth comes in. "Find a dentist with a fun, kid-friendly atmosphere, and bring your child in to take a tour and meet the dentist and staff," says Dr. Hollenberg of R.W. Hollenberg, DDS,

PA. There are also four main reasons why children should maintain healthy teeth: It allows proper chewing, aids in normal speech development, provides space for future adult teeth, and allows the muscles and the jaw bone to develop correctly. It's vital to your child's health to schedule those six-month visits.



Find a family or pediatric dentist with a kid-friendly atmosphere

Experts say children thrive when they feel connected to something bigger than themselves



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A Solid Spiritual Life

Children thrive when they have a solid spiritual connection to something bigger than themselves. "Without a strong, Christ-centered foundation in our life, our growth

is driven by the changing, shifting whims and fads of the 'culture du jour,'" says Curt Taylor, family pastor at Second Baptist. Be sure to set aside regular time for church, prayer, and scripture. Also, make sure children are aware of the family's morals and values. "If we want our kids to grow up to love God, then we as parents need to love God," says Taylor. "Not just say we love God, but demonstrate our love for God by how we live." **KM**



JULIE DOLD enjoys being on the editorial team at Katy Magazine and is going to make sure she incorporates these healthy tips into the life of her new baby, Emery.



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