

SOONERCARE

Inside

Are your kids home alone after school?

Play nice! Here's how to curb fighting and biting.

Screenings can help see if your child is developing normally.

Pack a Healthy School Lunch.

Ask the tooth fairy.

SoonerCare Helpline

1-800-987-7767. The Helpline will answer all of your questions about SoonerCare and how to get medical care, or they will transfer you to someone who can answer your questions.

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.

Fall
2009



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



COMPANION

What you need to know about the flu

By now, you probably know someone who has already had the flu this fall. Here's some basic information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on avoiding the flu, or what you can do if you suspect you or your children may have it.



Flu prevention

Vaccination is the best protection against getting the flu. This year, you need two vaccines to be fully protected: one for the seasonal strain and another for the **H1N1 (swine) flu**. The **H1N1** vaccine is especially recommended for the following groups:

- 🍏 **Pregnant women.**
- 🍏 **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months old.**
- 🍏 **People who work in health care and emergency medical services.**
- 🍏 **All children and young adults ages 6 months through 24 years.**
- 🍏 **People ages 25-64 who have certain health conditions (such as asthma, cancer, heart or kidney disease, blood disorders, chronic lung disease, diabetes and HIV/AIDS).**

These people could be at high risk for complications.

The other thing you can do is take everyday preventive actions. These include:

- 🍏 **Wash your hands often with soap and water.**
- 🍏 **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- 🍏 **Avoid close contact with sick people.**

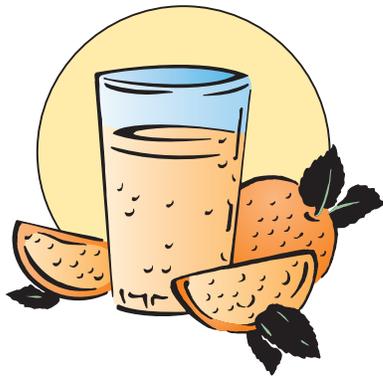
Flu symptoms

The symptoms of **H1N1 flu** are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, nausea, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with **H1N1 flu**. It is more common for children to report the gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea and vomiting.

If you have these symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people, except to seek medical care. If you are among the high-risk groups listed above, call your PCP right away.

Continued on page 2

Cold or fever, fluids will help



Growing up, you may have heard the old adage, “Feed a cold and starve a fever/flu.” Neither is a good idea, according to the American Lung Association’s cold and flu guidelines.

When you have a cold or the flu, you need plenty of fluids to get well. Drink plenty of water or juice, and eat enough food to satisfy your appetite. If you have a cough or a sore throat, drinking warm fluids may soothe a sore or scratchy throat.



Flu—Continued from page 1



Seek immediate medical help if your child has the following symptoms:

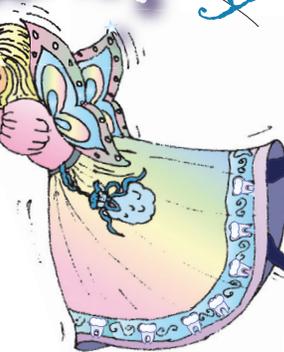
- 🍏 Fast breathing or trouble breathing.
- 🍏 Bluish or gray skin color.
- 🍏 Not drinking enough fluids.
- 🍏 Severe or persistent vomiting.
- 🍏 Not waking up or not interacting.
- 🍏 Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held.
- 🍏 Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

In adults, emergency warning signs include:

- 🍏 Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- 🍏 Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.
- 🍏 Sudden dizziness.
- 🍏 Confusion.
- 🍏 Severe or persistent vomiting.
- 🍏 Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

Ask the Tooth Fairy

What if my child has a toothache?



Call your child’s dentist and visit the office promptly. To comfort your child, rinse his or her mouth with water. Over-the-counter children’s pain medication might ease the symptoms. (Following the package directions regarding your child’s weight and age). You may apply a cold compress or ice wrapped in a cloth to the face in the area of the pain, but do not put heat or aspirin on the sore area.

If you do get the flu, you can take steps to get better and also to prevent spreading the virus:

- 🍏 Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away immediately.
- 🍏 Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleaners.
- 🍏 Stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
- 🍏 Take antiviral drugs and over-the-counter medicines if your doctor recommends them.
- 🍏 Don’t stop breast-feeding. Breast milk passes on antibodies to your baby that help fight off infection.

Antibiotics Are Not Always the Answer

When you are sick, you want to feel better fast. It is important to know that antibiotics are not good for every illness.

Why shouldn't I take antibiotics every time I get sick?

Antibiotics are strong medicines, but they don't cure everything. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them can harm your health.

Antibiotics do not work for:

- 🍏 Colds.
- 🍏 Flu.
- 🍏 Most coughs.
- 🍏 Bronchitis.
- 🍏 Sore throats (except those caused by strep).

Why don't antibiotics work for a cold or the flu?

Germs called viruses cause colds and the flu.

- 🍏 Antibiotics do not fight viruses.
- 🍏 Antibiotics fight germs called bacteria.



Taking antibiotics for a cold or the flu:

- 🍏 Will not help your body fight a cold or the flu.
- 🍏 Will not help you feel better.
- 🍏 Will not keep other people from catching the illness.

How do I know if I need antibiotics?

Ask your doctor and follow his or her advice. Remember, colds are caused by viruses, and antibiotics will not help.

If your doctor gives you antibiotics, make sure that you take all of the medicine. Not taking all of the medicine can cause germs to get stronger, and antibiotics may not help the next time.

Tell head lice to take a hike!

An adult head louse (CDC photo)



It's safe to guess that no one wants bugs in their hair, but it's not uncommon for bouts of head lice to make their way through preschool and elementary school children and their families.

Getting head lice doesn't mean your child or your home isn't clean. The most common way to get head lice is by head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice. This can happen at school, home, sports, playgrounds, camp and slumber parties.

Lice can also spread by:

- 🍏 Wearing clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms or hair ribbons, worn by an infested person.
- 🍏 Using infested combs, brushes or towels.
- 🍏 Lying on a bed, couch, pillow, carpet or stuffed animal that an infested person has used.



Both over-the-counter and prescription medicines are available. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider.

When treating head lice:

Do not use more medication than your doctor and pharmacist advise you to. The drugs used to treat lice can be dangerous if they are misused or overused.

Do not treat an infested person more than two or three times with the same medicine if it does not seem to be working. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if a different medicine is needed.

Do not use different head lice medicines at the same time unless your physician and pharmacist tell you to.

Apply lice medicine according to the instructions on the box or label.

Have the infested person put on clean clothes after treatment.

Nit combs are often found in lice medicine packages. These should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair.

Continue to check for two to three weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.

Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning. Instead, follow these tips:

Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens and other items that the infested person wore or used. Use the hot water laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle.

Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for five to 10 minutes.

Vacuum the floor and furniture.

Do not use pesticide sprays.



Are your kids home alone after school?

“Latchkey kids” is a term for younger students who come home from school to an empty home because their parents are at work.

As a parent, you may not prefer to have your kids at home alone, but sometimes when there are two parents working or only one parent in the home, you may not have any other choices. There are some risks to leaving your child home alone, but if you plan ahead and teach your child to follow these simple rules, you can feel better about their safety.

Before trying a “latchkey” arrangement, test your child at home alone by taking short trips away (for example, going to the grocery store or walking the dog). See if your child is comfortable with being left alone for that short time. If you return home and your child tells you that he or she was fine, then maybe you’re both ready. But if you return home and your child was not comfortable, you may want to think of another plan for after school.

Here are some ways to protect your latchkey kids:

- 🍏 **Have your children call you when getting home from school. Give them a warm welcome. Set a time for homework to be finished and tell them of any chores they need to do.**
- 🍏 **Never allow other children in your home while you are not there.**
- 🍏 **Set some rules. Write them down and post the rules in plain view. Your kids will be more aware, and that’s a good thing. If you don’t want them near the gas stove, write it down. If they need to leave the sharp kitchen knives alone, write it down.**
- 🍏 **Talk them through the rules, and talk to them about personal security. Remind them to lock the doors. Make sure they know not to let anyone in when you’re not there (except people like grandparents you have already told them can come in).**
- 🍏 **Show them how to use 911. Make sure they understand when to use it. And make sure they know it’s not a joke.**
- 🍏 **If you have firearms in the house, place them in a gun safe, not under a mattress or in a cupboard. You have a legal, ethical and moral responsibility to secure your firearms. The same applies to fireworks.**
- 🍏 **Give children emergency contact numbers (friends or neighbors who you trust to have good judgment if you aren’t available) for when you can’t get home**



fast enough.

- 🍏 **Make sure the kids understand Internet security. You aren’t there, and you need to know what they’re doing on their computers. Look into Internet monitoring software – low-cost products that monitor the activities of your kids and privately e-mail you the results as often as you like. The best of these products track sites visited, downloads, chat room conversations and instant messages.**
- 🍏 **Remember, don’t be afraid to be bold with your rules and guidelines. Praise builds self-esteem and confidence, so it is wise to praise children for even the smallest positive behavior.**

Lastly, let your children and teens know how much you love and trust them. If staying home is not an option, use common sense. Trust your instincts, and know when your child is uncomfortable with being alone. A safe child is one who is loved and disciplined. Society will welcome them into adulthood with open arms.

Play nice!

Here's how to curb fighting and biting



Biting, hitting and scratching are fairly common behaviors in children that often appear by age 1. However, a child who continues to bite and be aggressive may be showing signs of emotional or behavioral problems.

Biting

Some children bite to get attention or test their limits. Others bite because they are teething, unhappy, anxious or nervous. Biting can also indicate that a child has been exposed to harsh or excessive punishment or physical violence. At any rate, biting is one of the most common reasons children get expelled from daycare.

If your child is biting, the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recommends you take these steps:

- 🍏 Say “no” immediately, in a calm but firm and disapproving tone.
- 🍏 If your child is a toddler (1-2 years old), firmly hold the child or put the child down.
- 🍏 If your child is 2-3 years old, say, “Biting is not OK because it hurts people.”
- 🍏 Do NOT bite a child to show how biting feels. This teaches the child aggressive behavior.
- 🍏 If biting persists, try a negative consequence. For example, do not hold or play with a child for five minutes after he or she bites.

Fighting and hitting

Toddlers and school-age children often fight with each other for things that they want, such as toys. But when hitting and biting are frequent behaviors, the child could have other issues. The child could be unable to control anger, be upset or sad or may have experienced or seen this behavior at school, daycare or home.

To control fighting and hitting:

- 🍏 It is more helpful to step in before a child starts hitting: for example, if you see the child is very frustrated or getting upset.
- 🍏 When young children fight a lot, supervise them more closely.
- 🍏 If a child hits another child, separate them right away. Then try to comfort and attend to the other child.
- 🍏 If your child is a toddler (1-2 years old), say, “No hitting. Hitting hurts.”
- 🍏 If you have child age 2-3 years, say, “I know you are angry, but don’t hit. Hitting hurts.” This helps your child begin to learn empathy.
- 🍏 Do NOT hit a child if he or she is hitting others. This teaches the child to use aggressive behavior.
- 🍏 Parents should not ignore or downplay fighting between siblings.

If a child has a persistent problem with biting and fighting, parents should seek help from a professional who specializes in the evaluation and treatment of behavior problems in young children.

Behavioral Health Department

1-800-987-7767 or 1-800-652-2010

This service is for members who need help finding a behavioral health provider. It is not for emergencies.



Have a spooky, but safe Halloween

October brings about a beloved tradition for children: Halloween and fall festivals. It's fun to dress up, but don't forget to plan for safety while you're planning your costume. Review these American Academy of Pediatrics tips for trick-or-treating safety with your children.

M Plan costumes that are bright and show up in the dark. Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes aren't long enough to trip over or get caught up in.

M Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes and trick-or-treat bags for greater visibility.

M Masks can limit or block eyesight. Try non-toxic makeup and decorative hats instead.

M Make sure costumes, wigs and accessories are labeled "flame resistant."

M If your child carries a prop sword, cane or stick, make sure it is not sharp or too long. A child could be easily hurt if he stumbles or trips.

M Make sure everyone has flashlights with fresh batteries.

M Teach children how to call 911 (or their local emergency number) if they have an emergency or become lost.

M Young children should always have a parent or responsible adult with them. If your older children are going alone, plan a route that is OK with you. Agree on a specific time when they should return home.

M Only go to homes with a porch light on, and never enter a home or car for a treat.

M Stay in a group.

M Carry a cell phone.

M Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk at the far edge of the road facing traffic.

M Never cut across yards or use alleys. Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks where drivers know to look for people crossing. Never cross between parked cars or out driveways.

Good use of goodies

- ☺ Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats. Throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items.
- ☺ Give children a good meal before parties and trick-or-treating to discourage them from filling up on Halloween treats.
- ☺ You can always hand out treats that aren't food, such as coloring books or pens and pencils.
- ☺ Try to ration treats for the days following Halloween.

Screenings can help see if your child is developing normally

In the United States, 17 percent of children – almost one in five – have a developmental or behavioral disability. Many children also have delays in language or other areas that can keep them from being ready for school. Sadly, less than half of these children's problems are identified and treated before they start school.

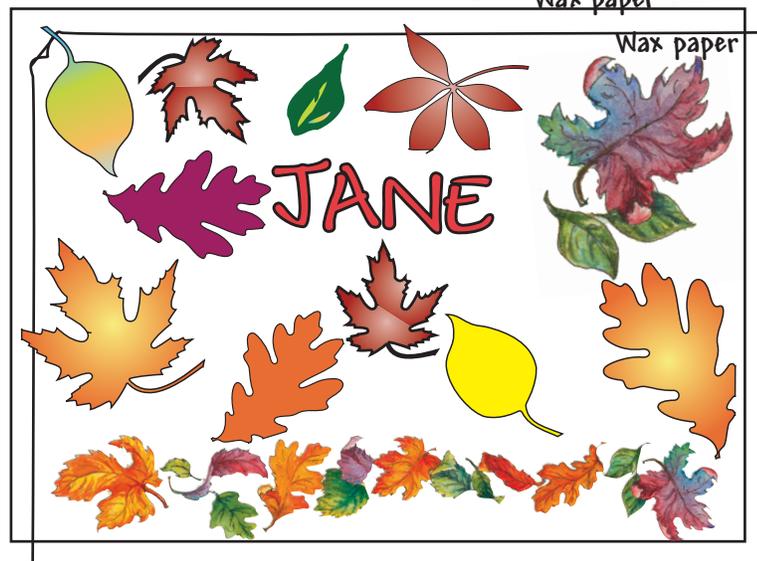
Your child's PCP (primary care provider) can help. Child health checkups give your PCP a chance to screen for developmental and other health problems. Finding these problems and treating them early can greatly improve your child's chances of reaching his or her full potential.

The PCP also can refer your child to a specialist for a more complete assessment if needed.

Kids Crafts



Lunch Bag



Place Mat

Wax paper

Wax paper

Fall is a great time for nature walks. Go with your children to gather colorful fall leaves.

Lunch Bag - Help your children make their own fall lunch bags. Take a small paper lunch bag and lay it flat on a hard surface. Trace around some of the leaves you have collected on your walk. Let your child color the leaves, decorate the sides of the bag and write their name on the front of the bag. Talk about healthy food. Let them help you make sandwiches, pick out fruit and pack their lunch bag. Some foods that pack well and are healthy are peanut butter sandwiches, celery and carrot sticks, fruit, cheese cubes, crackers and sugar-free, low-fat snacks. Your children will have fun taking their lunch in their own artistic fall bags!

Place Mat- Pick the prettiest leaves that you gather for a personalized place mat. Tear or cut two pieces of wax paper the same size, about 10 by 12 inches. Place one sheet of wax paper on your ironing board, then let your child arrange leaves in a pretty pattern on top of the wax paper. Cut out your child's name and place that on the sheet of wax paper with the leaves. Lay the second sheet of wax paper over the first. Let your children watch you heat your iron, then iron the top sheet of wax paper, melting the wax to make it stick to the leaves and the bottom sheet. Let it cool completely. Make one for each family member. Put your iron away, then let your children set the table with their very own place mats.

Pack a Healthy School Lunch

It's that time again: Kids are back in school. Parents who pack school lunches for their children need to prepare meals that provide key nutrients but are still fun to eat, child nutrition experts say.

Give your child a variety of choices that are visually appealing but low in empty starches. Parents often will not provide more nutritious foods because they believe their children won't like them. However, children need to be exposed to different foods often before they'll accept them.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 16 percent of children ages 6-19 are overweight, and the trend continues to rise. Children who are overweight can suffer from illnesses such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Nutritious meals are important. They help kids stay healthy and provide them with energy so they can learn and pay attention in class.

Following are some good ways to make lunches healthier.

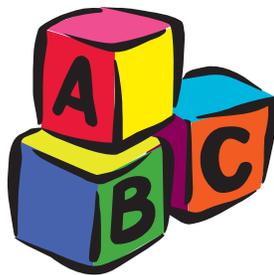
Healthier Alternatives

Instead of:	Try:
Higher-fat lunch meats	Lower-fat deli meats, such as turkey
White bread	Whole-grain breads (wheat, oat, multi-grain)
Mayonnaise	Light mayonnaise or mustard
Fried chips and snacks	Baked chips, air-popped popcorn, trail mix, veggies and dip
Fruit in syrup	Fruit in natural juices or fresh fruit
Cookies and snack cakes	Trail mix, yogurt or homemade baked goods such as oatmeal cookies or fruit muffins
Fruit drinks and soda	Low-fat milk, water or 100 percent fruit juice

For more ideas, visit http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/lunch.html#.

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

V is for vitamins (and so is A, B, C, D, E and K)



ABCs of SoonerCare

It's important for all of us to get our daily intake of vitamins. Our bodies need vitamins to stay healthy and develop properly. We need vitamins every day. While our body stores up some vitamins, it doesn't store all of them.

food you eat and how they help you become strong and healthy?

Below is a list from kidshealth.org that shows what vitamins are in different foods and what each vitamin is good for.

Did you ever wonder what vitamins are in the

Vitamin A	Milk, cantaloupe, carrots, sweet potatoes, kale, spinach	Helps with eyesight
Vitamin B	Whole grains, wheat and oats, fish, eggs, poultry	Helps oxygen move through the body; good for making energy
Vitamin C	Citrus fruits, oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, cabbage	Keeps body tissues such as gums and muscles in good shape
Vitamin D	Fish, egg yolks, milk fortified with vitamin D	Helps make bones and teeth strong
Vitamin E	Sardines, nuts, seeds, leafy green vegetables	Good for body tissue in our eyes, skin and liver and protects our lungs
Vitamin K	Dairy products, broccoli, soybean oil	Helps blood clot and form a scab when you get a cut

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.

This publication, printed by O. U. Printing Services is issued by The Oklahoma Health Care Authority as authorized by Title VI and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. 220,500 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$18,300.00 Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. [74 O.S.2001 § 3105 (C)]Download additional copies on the OHCA Web site <http://www.okhca.org/sooner-care-companion> - SNLENG-COMPAN-FAL09