



# THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

January 2010

A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AS THEY REINFORCE THE INFORMATION YOUTH RECEIVE THROUGH WELLNESS JOURNEY PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES.

## Keeping Kids Active

Like adults, kids need regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. It is recommended that most children get one hour of physical activity every day. Regular exercise helps children

- Feel less stressed
- Feel better about themselves
- Feel more ready to learn in school
- Keep a healthy weight
- Build and keep healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Sleep better at night

The best way for kids to get physical activity is by incorporating physical activity into their daily routine.

### What motivates kids to be active?

The three keys are:

1. **Choosing the right activities for a child's age, ability and interest:** Otherwise, the child may become bored or frustrated.
2. **Giving kids plenty of opportunity to be active:** Kids need parents to make activity easy by providing equipment and taking them to playgrounds and other active spots.
3. **Keeping the focus on fun:** Kids won't do something they don't enjoy.

When kids enjoy an activity, they want to do more of it. Practicing a skill — whether it's swimming or riding a tricycle — improves their abilities and helps them feel accomplished. These good feelings often make kids want to continue the activity and even try others.

Team sports can boost kids' self-esteem, coordination, and general fitness, and help them learn how to work with other kids and adults.

But some kids aren't natural athletes and they may tell you — directly or indirectly — that

## TESSA'S HEALTH TIPS

Forget about a whole year...

### Try 'JUST-FOR-A-DAY RESOLUTIONS'

- Just for today, go for a brisk walk.
- Just for today, skip pop and carbonated beverages.
- Just for today, exercise your sense of humor.
- Just for today, eat healthy.



## PRODUCE PICKS

This month add a juicy orange, sweet mango, or crispy cucumber to your lunch box! For dinner, change up a salad by adding green pepper or jicama. For a healthy snack, try frozen blueberries or dried fruit.

they just don't like sports. What then?

### **There's plenty a kid can do to be active each day.**

Free play can be very important for kids who don't play a team sport. Free play is the activity kids get when they're left to their own devices, like shooting baskets, riding bikes, playing whiffleball, playing tag, jumping rope, climbing the monkey bars or dancing.

Kids might also enjoy individual sports or other organized activities that can boost fitness, such as:

- swimming
- inline skating
- hiking/running
- gymnastics
- horseback riding
- cycling
- golf
- martial arts
- dance classes
- skateboarding
- tennis
- Ultimate Frisbee

### **Supporting Your Kid's Choices**

Work with your child to find something active that he or she likes. Keep an open mind and help your child explore all the possibilities.

You'll need to be patient if your child has difficulty choosing and sticking to an activity. It often takes several tries before kids find one that feels like the right fit. But when something clicks, it's one big step toward developing active habits that can last a lifetime.

### **Why Some Kids Don't Like Teams**

If your child is not interested in team sports, try to find out why. You might be able to help address deeper concerns or steer your child toward something else.

Here are some reasons why team sports might be a turnoff for kids:

#### **Still Developing Basic Skills**

Though many sports programs are available for preschoolers, it's not until about age 6 or 7 that most kids have the physical skills, the attention span, and the ability to grasp the rules needed to play organized sports.

Kids who haven't had much practice in a specific sport might need time to reliably perform necessary skills such as kicking a soccer ball on the run or hitting a baseball thrown from the pitcher's mound. Trying and failing, especially in a game situation, might frustrate them or make them nervous.

**What you can do:** Practice with your child at home. Whether it's shooting baskets, playing catch, or going for a jog together, you'll give your child an opportunity to build skills in a safe environment.

#### **It's Too Competitive**

A child who's already a reluctant athlete might feel extra-nervous when the focus is only on winning.

**What you can do:** Investigate sports programs before signing your child up for one. Talk

## HEALTHY RECIPE

### **Make Your Own Taco Salad**

*One way to save time is to prepare ingredients and have diners assemble the meal themselves!!*

4 oz baked tortilla chips  
15-oz can heated black beans  
1 bag ready-to-serve tossed salad mix  
1 can Mexican-flavored diced tomatoes  
1 cup fat-free sour cream  
oil and vinegar

Place all ingredients into bowls. Diners make a taco salad by putting ingredients on their plates in the order they desire.

*Serves 4. Each 2-cup serving: 319 calories, 2.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 650 mg sodium, 60 g carbohydrate, 11.5 g fiber, 15 g protein.*

with coaches and other parents about the philosophy. Look for noncompetitive leagues.

### **Stage Fright**

Kids who aren't natural athletes or are a little shy might be uncomfortable with the pressure of being on a team. More self-conscious kids also might worry about letting their parents, coaches, or teammates down.

**What you can do:** Keep your expectations realistic. Let your child know the goal is to be fit and have fun. If the coach or league doesn't agree, it's time to look for something new.

### **Still Shopping for a Sport**

Some kids haven't found the right sport. Maybe a child who doesn't have the hand-eye coordination for baseball has the drive and the build to be a swimmer, a runner, or a cyclist.

**What you can do:** Be open to your child's interests in other sports or activities. By exploring other options, you give your child a chance to get invested in something he or she truly enjoys.

### **Other Barriers**

Different kids mature at different rates, so expect a wide range of heights, weights, and athletic abilities among kids of the same age group. A child who's much bigger or smaller than other kids of the same age — or less coordinated or not as strong — may feel self-conscious and uncomfortable competing with them. Kids also might be afraid of getting injured or worried that they can't keep up. Kids can also have very different personalities and temperaments. Some are outgoing and competitive and love to play team sports, while others are overwhelmed with the idea of being on the field with a large group of kids.

**What you can do:** Give some honest thought to your child's strengths, abilities, and temperament, and find an activity that might be a good match. Some kids are afraid of the ball, so they don't like softball or volleyball but may enjoy an activity like running. If your child is overweight, he or she might lack the endurance to run, but might enjoy a sport like swimming. A child who's too small for the basketball team may enjoy gymnastics or wrestling.

Keep in mind that some kids don't like team sports simply because they had a bad experience with one sport, team, or coach, and you might give another team or sport a chance or join a new team with a close friend so that he feels more comfortable.

Try to address your child's concerns. By being understanding and providing a supportive environment, you'll help foster success in whatever activity your child chooses.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### ***Heartfest***

Henry County Health Center's Annual Health Fair

Friday, February 12  
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

HCHC Health Education Center

### ***Turn Off the TV Month***

March 2010

Fun family activities!

### ***Healthy Lifestyle Conference***

April 21, 2010  
8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Comfort Inn & Suites  
Burlington, Iowa

If you have questions contact:  
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*For more information on the Wellness Journey programming, topics or events, contact Tessa Yakle, Wellness Coordinator, at 319-385-6595 or by e-mail at [yaklet@hchc.org](mailto:yaklet@hchc.org).*