



Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

August 25, 2020

We know life may be challenging right now and we want you to know your Henry Ford pediatrician is still here for you. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. Information in our newsletters is yours to use when it is helpful to you, and yours to disregard when it is not. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.

Back to School Traditions - COVID Style

Regardless of how your child is going back to school this year, there is a good chance that it will be different. That doesn't mean you can't still have fun with your back-to school traditions. You might not be able to take a picture with the teacher or in your child's classroom, but you can still drive to the school to snap a picture outside. Or print an image from the virtual school and take a picture with that. Homeschooling? Make your own school name and logo. Don't need a back to school outfit or uniform? Maybe try special PJs or play clothes. If you are looking for some more ideas, take a look at these [first week of school traditions](#). What is important is to find a way to mark this transition to school in a way that works for your family and reminds your child that going back to school is an important memory to treasure, even if it doesn't look the way we originally imagined.

Back to School Anxiety

Back to school time can be anxiety-inducing during a regular school year. In the times of COVID-19, the thought of going back to school can be extremely scary for parents and children of all ages. As parents make decisions on what would be best for their families regarding virtual or in-person learning, it's important to pay close attention to any changes in your child's behavior. These changes can be indications that they are also struggling with feelings of stress or anxiety about the upcoming school year. [Here are some signs](#) to look for along with ways to support your child's mental health during this back to school transition period. We are wishing your family a very healthy and successful school year!

Returning to a Schedule or Structure

This year has created a new normal for everyone. Most children and adults have been home or away from their normal routine for much longer than expected. As the new school year approaches, it may be helpful to return to some type of schedule. [Keeping a schedule](#) may also help things feel more organized and closer to the "normal" we were used to. It is important to have a schedule you can stick to and leave room for adjustment if it isn't working. Keeping familiar activities in the schedule can also help make staying on track a little easier. For example, having meals or snacks at the same time school would set aside if your child were attending in-person. Also having outdoor time every day or setting aside some quiet time may help make things feel less stressful. These [printable routine cards](#) can be a fun way to help kids stick to a routine.

School Lunches During COVID-19

Whether your child is starting the school year off with face-to-face instruction or virtually, chances are there will be changes to how you prepare school lunches. If your child will be at home, you may need some examples for [quick lunch ideas](#). If you'll be working and can't take a break to fix meals, try

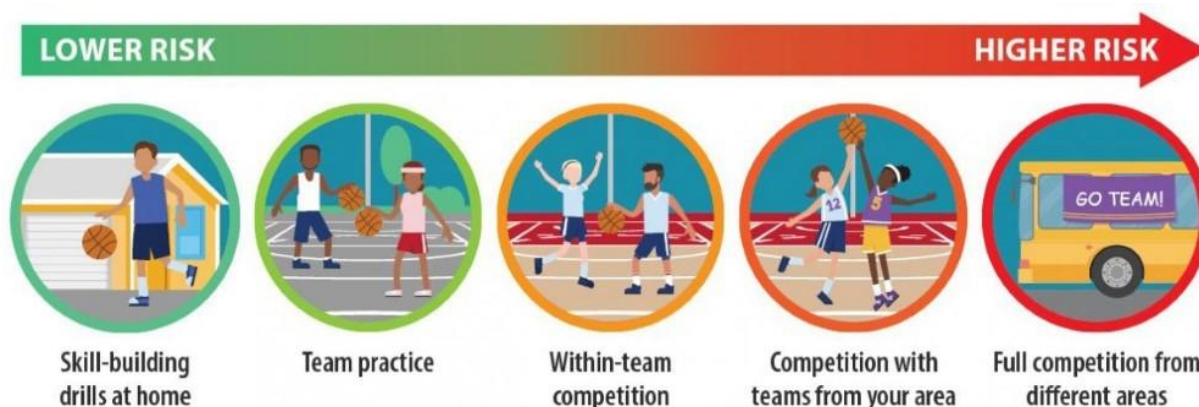
these [make-ahead lunches](#). Many school districts will still be providing meals available for pick-up or delivery; check with your district for more details.

If your child will be going to school, you may be looking for disposable options to limit the number of items traveling home from school. Kids Eat In Color has a great list for [disposable lunches](#) and so does [Momables](#). If you want to try to cut down on germs and waste, this list of [reusable sandwich bags](#) has different sizes, most of which can either go through the dishwasher or washing machine.

Youth Sports

Playing a sport can be a fun time in a child's life. There is lots of learning and growth that can happen from involvement in sports. It can benefit children in many other ways including incorporating a steady fitness routine, while also teaching the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Below are [recommendations from the CDC](#) on playing youth sports during the times of COVID-19:

- Stay home if sick.
- Players should bring their own equipment, like gloves and bats, if possible.
- Reduce physical closeness and keep 6 feet of space between players when possible.
- Wear a mask if possible.
- Players should clean their hands before and after practices, games, and sharing equipment.
- Tell a coach or staff member if you don't feel well.



While playing sports can be fun and possibly lead to athletic scholarships and professional careers, it's important that we keep ourselves and our children as safe as we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Go to the Henry Ford [Facebook page](#) for a video of a Q&A with Sports Medicine staff on youth sports during COVID-19.

Home-Based Behavioral Activities for Kids with Autism

Even under the best of circumstances, keeping autistic children who have behavioral challenges happy and engaged can be difficult. Add the coronavirus pandemic to the mix and addressing children's needs with stimulating activities day in and day out demands some creativity. Read more [here](#).

Sensory Sensitivities and Mask Wearing

Masks help protect us and others from the coronavirus. But people with sensory sensitivities may have trouble getting used to them. Going slowly and not expecting immediate success is important. When working with someone with sensitivities, this [mask and communication](#) guide is a good resource. For people who do well with visual guides, [Wearing a Mask Social Story](#) may help. Younger children may respond better to the social story [We Wear Masks](#). Based on current information, face shields are not a substitute for masks. But they may be better than nothing if someone cannot tolerate a mask. This [CDC page](#) has good information on masks and the sections on Feasibility & Adaptations and Face Shields are good resources for people struggling with mask wearing.

Let's Get Healthy! and LGH-Teen Are Going Virtual

[Let's Get Healthy!](#) is a motivating, 12-week program that teaches children ages 9-13 and their families how to take simple steps toward understanding the importance of healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle. The LGH team is made up of a doctor or nurse, registered dietician, behavioral therapist and personal trainer. By partnering each child with at least one parent or caregiver, families and the teaching team work together to reshape how each child and their family think about food, nutrition and exercise.

We are also offering a brand-new LGH Teen program for teens ages 14-18. This program builds on the foundational messages of LGH while addressing the unique needs of teens. LGH-Teen participants are not required to have a parent present.

For the fall session, groups will meet virtually once a week. Programming includes a wide variety of topics including mindful eating, snack choices, staying motivated and body image. Classes will be fun, interactive and provide you a chance to learn and get answers to your healthy lifestyle questions from the comfort and safety of your own home. Each class will have thirty minutes of live physical activity instruction. For more information or to register, please call (313) 874-6653 or email us at LetsGetHealthy@hfhs.org.

Age Appropriate Chores

There are many ways kids can help at home. Age appropriate chores can be a great way for children to contribute to household needs. Those as young as toddler age can assist with the simpler chores. There are many reasons age appropriate chores are beneficial: making the child feel wanted, teaching work ethic and responsibility, and to help ease the workload on parents. [This ultimate chore list](#) can help parents decide which chores are appropriate for their child. Creating [a chore chart](#) may also be a fun, creative way to encourage children to assist with chores. This chart is a quick list to get started.

AGES 2-3	AGES 4-5	AGES 6-7
Put away toys Fill a pet's food dish Put clothes in the hamper Wipe up spills Dust safe & easy-to-reach areas Stack books on shelves Help make beds Mop small areas with a dry mop	Sort laundry Fold towels & washcloths Help unload the dishwasher Sweep floors Set & clear the table Help make & pack lunches Rake leaves & pick up sticks Help put away groceries	Clean bathrooms & kitchen Sweep out the garage Cook a simple meal, with adult supervision Do laundry on their own Iron clothes Keep an eye on younger siblings Prepare simple meals
AGES 8-9	AGES 10-11	AGES 12+
Make beds on their own Empty wastebaskets Bring in the mail & newspapers Clear the table Pull weeds Use a handheld vacuum Water flowers Help plant a veggie garden or tree	Load the dishwasher Vacuum Assist with kid-friendly DIY projects Put away laundry Take out the trash Mop floors Take pets for walks	Wash windows Maintain compost bins Paint walls Undertake simple home projects Mow the lawn with supervision Change lightbulbs Change (or reuse!) a vacuum bag Deep-clean rooms



Has your child's behavior changed?

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or emotions since the pandemic started? If you have any concerns or questions, please call (313) 451-0720. This is a Google Voice phone number that will call our Henry Ford coordinator who can help to connect you with a behavioral therapist for children.

Are there other topics you are interested in and would like to learn more about?

If yes, please e-mail us at ParentConnection@hfhs.org or to unsubscribe.