



Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

January 26, 2021

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.

Indoor Fitness

As the winter continues, we may find it [difficult to get outside](#) for physical activity. It is recommended that kids and teens get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Exercise is also a great way to improve not only physical health, but mental health as well. There are many fun and creative ways we can get exercise while staying indoors. Many [exercises can be done with minimal space](#) and equipment. [Teens](#) can also find great ways to exercise at home. Many exercises can be done with just the weight of your own body, for example: push-ups, squats, sit-ups and planks. There are also many workouts that [can bring the entire family together](#), no matter the age!

COVID-19 Vaccine

For many people, the announcement that the COVID-19 vaccine is starting to be available is great news. It feels like a light at the end of a long and dark tunnel. However, as with most new medical advances, there is a lot of misinformation out there. It's very important when deciding about receiving a vaccine (once it's available to you) that you have accurate information from evidence-based, reliable sources. Henry Ford has put together a list of [myths about the COVID-19 vaccine](#) to help guide your decision making. Several Henry Ford physicians also participated in a [Facebook Live presentation](#) to answer questions about the vaccine. The CDC has even more information [about the vaccine](#) to help clear up misconceptions. While the vaccine is not currently available for children and adolescents under 16, we encourage parents and caregivers to get vaccinated when they can. Keeping yourself healthy can only help keep the children you love healthy.

Bath Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics has [five tips for making](#) bath time easier and safer. One of the most important is supervision. Never leave your child alone in the bathtub, even for a short period of time. One way to help with this is to do a check to make sure you have everything you need before putting your child in the bath. Another important measure is to make sure the temperature of your child's bath is about 100°F. If possible, get a bath [thermometer](#). If you don't have a bath thermometer, you can use the inside of your elbow or wrist as a good measure for whether the water is too hot or cold. Additionally, it can be a good idea to [adjust the settings on your water heater](#). Setting it to a maximum of 120°F can help to prevent accidental scalding. It is also important to try to prevent slips and falls by putting grips on the bottom of your bathtub. Covering the faucet with a soft cushion cover will help if your child bumps their head against it.

Car Seat 102: When to Stop Rear Facing

Michigan law states that children must remain [rear facing in a car seat until they are 1 year old and at least 20 pounds](#). However, what the law allows and what is safe practice are not always the same. Both the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) recommend children remain rear-facing until they reach the maximum limits of their car seat or are at least two years

old. It is important to know why rear facing is considered safer. Babies and toddlers' bones are still developing, and their heads are often larger in proportion to their bodies. The positioning of a rear facing car seat does a better job of protecting heads and necks [even in a rear-end collision](#). Concerns about the comfort and [safety of a child's legs](#) have not been supported by research. There is also little evidence that forward facing truly [helps with motion sickness](#). Car seat specifications vary by manufacturer and model. It is important to follow the instructions in your manual. One point of confusion with convertible car seats comes from the following statement in most manuals: *Use only in a rear-facing position when using it with an infant weighing less than 20 pounds*. People may think this states a child must be forward facing when they weigh 20 pounds. But it really means a child weighing less than 20 pounds can only rear face. Your manual should also include the maximum weight limit (often 40-50 pounds) for a specific seat to rear face.

Pandemic Fatigue

[Pandemic fatigue](#) is real and after almost a year, most of us are feeling it to some extent. Now that vaccines are being distributed there is both a light at the end of the tunnel and the realization that the tunnel is longer than we hoped. If you are feeling this, you are not alone. Not knowing [when the pandemic will end](#) is likely the root of much of this fatigue. We have not, collectively, been able to see a reward for our precautions and sacrifices. There are some things you can do, like these [5 tips for handling pandemic fatigue](#) and [ways to cope](#). To continue managing the effects of the pandemic, it is important to [fight against pandemic fatigue](#) with as much effort as fighting COVID-19 itself.

If pandemic fatigue has become too much and you need help, please contact your Henry Ford provider who can recommend support for you or your family. You can also get confidential support from a [Michigan Stay Well](#) counselor 24/7 by calling 1-888-535-6136 and pressing 8.

Indoor Sensory Activities

The winter months can be a difficult time to keep kids entertained. The added pandemic and more time spent indoors can add another level of stress. Sensory activities are meant to stimulate a child's senses and there are many indoor [sensory activities](#) that are inexpensive and a great way to stimulate creativity and imagination. Sensory bins are a great place to start regarding sensory play. [Sensory bins](#) come in all themes, sizes, and colors. [Sensory bottles](#) can be also be a great activity that even older kids may enjoy. Whatever activity you choose, sensory activities can offer endless amounts of fun.

Protect Your Child from Human Trafficking

Human trafficking continues to be a major issue in our global society. While some people are unsure of how human trafficking continues to increase, others are completely unaware of what the term means. According to the [Department of Homeland Security](#), "human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sexual act." This is not a crime that only happens in countries that are overseas, and it doesn't always look like the dramatic situations we see in media. Human trafficking is happening right here in the United States. It's also important to understand that while an overwhelming majority of victims are women or girls, human trafficking can happen to anyone, regardless of race or gender. A child can still live at home, go to school and participate in activities while being trafficked.



This is such a scary reality and fear for so many parents. So, how do we [protect our children](#)? Below are some [tips](#) to help parents:

- **Talk to your child about the realities of sexual abuse.** Remind your child that he or she can talk to you about anything.
- **Ask them to come to you if there is abuse or mistreatment.** This includes verbal, physical, emotional or sexual.
- **Know your child's friends.**
- **Trust your child but be cautious about surroundings.** Take advantage of online parental control settings and stay aware of all cell phone communications.
- **Be social media savvy.** Monitor your child's social media activity and remind him or her to keep all personal information private.
- **Keep online time out in the open.** Ensure your child is only on the internet in common areas of your home, like a living room, kitchen or family room.
- **Be transparent about your own life experiences.** This may help your child understand your concerns and could encourage them to confide in you when it really counts.

- **Take the time for extracurricular activities.** Encourage your child to be active in sports, school clubs and other places children hang out.

While there are also [strategies and legislation](#) in place, along with [organizations](#) doing their part to help combat human trafficking, law enforcement also needs the help of the public to assist them in shutting down and prosecuting traffickers. If you know or suspect that someone is being trafficked, please contact the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), call 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711), text 233733, or live chat from their website.



Youth Advocacy Spotlight



"To succeed, you must read." – AJ Briscoe

Every month, we will take a moment to feature a person who is making a difference in the lives of youth. This month, we are featuring Malcolm Mitchell. Mitchell is best known as an ex-NFL wide receiver. He is also a poet and an author. Recently, Mitchell started a foundation to help children develop a passion for reading. His [Share The Magic Foundation](#) is based off the title of his first book, "[The Magician's Hat.](#)" You can also find him on YouTube as a featured author with Barnes and Noble's Storytime as he reads his newest book, "[My Very Favorite Book in the Whole Wide World.](#)" Through his writings and his foundation, Mitchell is doing his part to help the youth of today develop a love for reading.

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.