



Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

May 22, 2020

We know life may be challenging right now and we want you to know your Henry Ford pediatrician is still here for you. We will continue to be a source of information and care for your child. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.

Recognizing Stress in Children

The phrase “kids are resilient” is used often and is generally true. However, during times of crisis it can be easy to miss the [signs of stress and anxiety](#) in children. For kids, stress often shows up as physical or behavior changes. Sleep disruptions, outbursts, clinginess and bedwetting are all ways stress can manifest in children. The American Psychological Association has a list of [phrases to listen for](#) that may indicate your child or teen is experiencing stress.

Next week, one of our Henry Ford behavioral therapists will share ways you can talk to your child about their emotions during the pandemic. But if you think your child is reacting negatively to stress, don't hesitate to ask what's troubling them or seek help if you think it is needed. To help them cope, try this [five step exercise](#). This list of [12 steps to reduce](#) your child's stress may be helpful as well. It can also help to limit their exposure to news and adult conversations. Children often absorb adult stressors without us realizing it.

Toddlers, Naturally Picky Eaters

Toddlers can be naturally picky eaters. Favorite foods today may be hated tomorrow. During this stage, it is important to let your child lead this process. Learning to follow their hunger cues will create healthy food habits. Don't force foods. It is better to model healthy eating, have family meals as often as possible, and offer new foods with reliable favorites. Don't give up if something is rejected. It can take more than 10 times tasting something before it accepted as a regular food. Healthy Children has advice on [toddler nutrition](#) and Kids Health has advice to [avoid power struggles](#). [Kids Eat in Color](#) is also another resource for introducing new foods.

Family Dinners

Everyone's hectic schedule can leave sitting down for family dinners very difficult. However, sitting down even a few times a week can be a great way to stay connected as a family. [Family dinners help](#) to establish a routine and allow us to learn about each other's daily activities. Family dinners do not have to be difficult. [Simple meals](#) where children can assist allows the entire family to be involved. Family dinners are also a great way to model healthy eating and introduce new foods.

Brush Twice a Day, While the Dentist is Away

With dentist offices in the state closed for routine care, it's important to help your kids take excellent care of their teeth. [Recommendations](#) vary by age, but in general all children over age 1 should be brushing their teeth twice a day. Parents should be assisting with back teeth until the child is able to do it well alone, usually around age 6. Flossing should be introduced as early as your child will tolerate it.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests implementing the [Brush, Book, Bed](#) program to create a nightly routine for oral health. If you're looking for a fun activity, America's Pediatric Dentists has [The Mouth Monsters](#), which has coloring pages and activities for kids around taking care of your teeth. If your child is reluctant to brush, check out these [tips](#) to encourage good dental habits.

Our Changing Bodies

As young people begin to grow older, it can be uncomfortable for some parents to have discussions about puberty. Below are a few important points before starting the conversation:

- Ask your child what they may already know and provide clarity to any incorrect information
- Educate yourself so that you can respond to questions
- Do not be afraid to let your child know when you don't know the answer and be willing to look up the answer together
- Try your best to keep a positive, non-judgmental attitude

There are many resources to help parents navigate these conversations. [Kid's Health](#) has a wide range of topics related to puberty to help start and continue the conversation.

Sleep Recommendations

For adults and children, it can be hard to commit to a sleep schedule. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) lists suggestions for how to make sure each family member develops healthy sleep habits. The chart below outlines the recommendations according to age.

Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations*

Age	Recommended Sleep Hours per 24 Hour Period
Infants: 4 to 12 months	12 to 16 hours (including naps)
Toddlers: 1 to 2 years	11 to 14 hours (including naps)
Preschoolers: 3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours (including naps)
Gradeschoolers: 6 to 12 years	9 to 12 hours
Teens: 13 to 18 years	8 to 10 hours

*The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a Statement of Endorsement supporting these guidelines from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).
Source: Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, Hall W, Kotagal S, Lloyd RM, Malow B, Maski K, Nichols C, Quan SF, Rosen CL, Troester MM, Wise MS. Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations: A Statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. J Clin Sleep Med. 2016 May 25. pii: jc-00158-16. PubMed PMID: 27250809.

As we navigate through a global health crisis, sleep schedules can become more difficult to maintain. All the changes that we are experiencing can play a role in our sleep schedule struggles. As we adjust to online classwork and parents working from home becoming our new normal, it's important that we still try to prioritize sleep. While prioritizing, we also need to give ourselves and our children grace. [Here](#) are some ways to help children who may be having trouble sleeping during these times. If you have teenagers in your home, please share [the importance of sleep](#) with them.

Baby Blues, Postpartum Depression and COVID-19

Bringing a new baby home is both wonderful and stressful. It is very common for mothers to experience a range of emotions. To prepare, it is good to know the [difference](#) between the baby blues and something more serious. The social distancing required with COVID-19 can make things even harder to [manage](#). Being isolated can make it difficult to [cope](#). Please remember that treatment and support are still available. Medication is not always needed. If it is, there are many safe options, even for mothers who are breastfeeding. If you have any persistent or bothersome symptoms, talk to your obstetrician or midwife.

How is your child doing? How are you doing?

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.

For teens and adults, Henry Ford has the Community Emotional Support Call Line available. You do not have to be a Henry Ford patient to use this line. It is available 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. at (313) 874-0343. You will be able to speak with a therapist and be connected to more resources if needed. See this [flyer](#) for more information.

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.