



Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

July 28, 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.

AAP Position on School Reopening

Right now, almost every parent is struggling with what to do about school. Do you send your children to school and possibly expose them to COVID-19? We've all heard conflicting information. Primarily, that kids don't really get sick from COVID-19 (this is the position of the [CDC for reopening schools](#)), it should be fine. But then of those that do, some develop [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children \(MIS-C\)](#). 342 cases have been reported, the majority of which were children of color, and 6 children have died. Keeping your children home has its own set of questions. Will they learn enough? What about socialization? How will you keep your job without childcare? If your kids eat breakfast and lunch at school, food becomes an issue. Most parents are already exhausted thinking about school and the year hasn't even started.

While we cannot make your decision for you (especially with every district and family having their own unique requirements) we wanted to share with you where our biggest health organization stands on the re-opening of schools nationwide. The American Academy of Pediatrics, in conjunction with several teacher and administrator groups, has taken the position that a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for return to school decisions. Their statement includes the following:

"Returning to school is important for the healthy development and well-being of children, but we must pursue re-opening in a way that is safe for all students, teachers and staff. Science should drive decision-making on safely reopening schools. Public health agencies must make recommendations based on evidence, not politics. We should leave it to health experts to tell us when the time is best to open up school buildings and listen to educators and administrators to shape how we do it."

They also strongly advocate for adequate federal funding to schools to allow for a safe re-entry for students, staff and parents. Read their full position [here](#). They have also provided [tips for schools](#) to minimize risk once school resumes. The advice relies heavily on issues we are all now familiar with, social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene. While these are proven ways to mitigate risk, they are also challenging to enforce with children, in spaces that are often over-crowded and under-funded. We know this is tough. We know you may not feel comfortable with any option and will likely spend time worrying and second guessing yourself. We also know that no matter what you do, you will have the best interest of your children in mind and will make the decision for your family.

If you have specific medical concerns, please reach out to your pediatrician. They can evaluate your situation and help guide your decision-making.

Suicide and Adolescence

Adolescence is hard. Adolescence during a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and a renewed civil rights movement may be too much. Social distancing has changed most summer activities. It is almost August and school plans are not set. It has been a long time since things felt like normal. That can lead to [feelings of despair](#). This is a good time to [check in](#) with the young people in your life to make sure they are okay. Henry Ford doctors noticed an increase in suicide attempts among young people since the pandemic began. We want you to have [resources and tips](#) for addressing suicide with adolescents. You can also help adolescents [protect their friends](#). Knowing the risk factors and warning signs is the best way to help and protect loved ones. The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) is an excellent resource. You can also call your pediatrician. If you need some support, the [Henry Ford Emotional Support Line](#) is a great resource for both teens and adults.

Pregnant During a Pandemic

COVID-19 has changed all of our lives. People who are currently expecting a child are amongst those who've had to make some considerable adjustments. Pregnancy during a regular year can be frightening for some, but pregnancy during a pandemic can bring about certain fears and anxiety that were not initially present. For the health of the parent, child and all loved ones involved, it's important that we take some time and try our best to [ease the fears](#). The Center for Disease Control has provided [guidance for people who are currently expecting](#). More specifically, when it comes to labor and delivery, making sure you are [as prepared as possible](#) may help relieve some stress. While hospitals have strict visitor policies and prenatal doctor appointments may look different, [this mom](#) shares some joy that she found in being pregnant during a pandemic.

Always remember, you have every right to be disappointed in not being able to celebrate your pregnancy the way you had planned. Prioritizing your health and the health of your unborn child is so important during these times. Talk to your doctor or therapist if you need more insight and support.

Summer Hydration

Hot summer days can bring many fun activities for ourselves and family. One important thing to remember is [staying hydrated](#). Children especially, may forget to drink an adequate amount when they are busy having fun and playing outside. The amount of [fluid needed may change](#) depending on the age and activity level of the child. On average, a child should aim for 6 to 8 glasses of water per day. If you are finding it difficult to get your child to drink water, there are many [things we can do to encourage water drinking](#). For example, create flavored water by adding fruit or purchase a fun reusable bottle.

How to Talk to Racist Family Members

Having conversations about racism can be tough. Having conversations about racism with family members who totally disagree with your views can be unbearable. While most can understand the importance of speaking up and combating racist rhetoric, some would agree that this is not always a simple task. [Here](#) are ways that you can start the conversation in hopes of making progress. If you are white, [this article](#) discusses how and why white people should have these conversations.

Below you will also find some tips for starting and continuing conversations about racism:

- *Listen Actively.* You may not agree but avoid interrupting. Allow each person to finish their thoughts.
- *Ask questions.* Asking follow-up questions may help set the tone for a deeper, more productive conversation.
- *Use examples.* Using both historical and current day references can help provide clarity for rebuttals that may not be accurate or logical.

Begin the conversation from a place of kindness while also trying to avoid a confrontational and demeaning tone. Remember that things may get uncomfortable but helping someone that you care about learn and grow can be worth it. Also, it's important to be aware that you may not get them to understand or change their beliefs. No one conversation will change someone from being staunchly racist into an anti-racist. However, your conversation may plant the seed that leads to personal growth. Being a consistent and reliable ally and standing up for others can influence others to do the same. One by one, having these difficult conversations can help bring about some much-needed change.

Bedtime Routines

Routines are important in structuring our days. This is especially important for [young children](#). Bedtime routines are key to a good night's sleep and a good start to the next day. The long summer days and fewer activities outside of the home can easily lead to routine creep. If you are finding that bedtime is getting later or harder than you want, it might be time to reassess your routine. Here are some tips for helping create a routine for your [toddler, school-aged and/or middle school children](#). [Teens](#) are more independent but may still need some help. The right routine for your family will depend on both your needs and the needs of your child(ren). If everyone feels safe and rested, it's probably a good routine for your household. Of course, the adults may not be as rested as the kids!

Dorm Room Essentials

Whether you are starting college or returning, college is an exciting time. Students living on campus often start out in a college dorm. Students may be asking themselves, "what are the necessary things needed for dorm living?" The fun part is making the limited space your own. This [list of 30 dorm room essentials](#) can help you start your shopping list. College can also come with living on a budget. There are many [budget friendly ways to furnish your dorm](#) space. Checking the dollar store, good will, or Salvation Army can be a good start when trying to stay on a budget.

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.*