



# HEALTHLINK

SPRING 2009



## Achoo! Kids Have Allergies, Too

Just like adults, babies and young children can have allergies. A common allergy in children is allergic rhinitis. It's also called hay fever.

If your child has hay fever, he or she may feel worse in springtime. That's because a lot of pollen is released by plants in the spring. Pollen can trigger hay fever symptoms.

Other allergy triggers are mold, pet dander, and dust. When your child is near these triggers, he or she may have symptoms like:

- A runny nose
- Congestion
- Sneezing
- Itchy eyes and throat

How can you help your kid feel better? Follow these steps to reduce

triggers in your home. With fewer triggers around, your child may have fewer symptoms.

- Wash blankets, sheets, and other bedding in hot water at least once a week.
- Try a dehumidifier. This machine helps keep mold away.
- Remove carpet from your baby's room. Vacuum carpets and floors at least once a week.
- If you smoke, quit. Smoke can make your child's allergies worse.
- If you have a furry pet, keep it out of the bedrooms. ■

If you need help quitting tobacco, call the Nebraska Quitline for FREE support: **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)**.

## Spring into Fitness

Are you thinking about getting in shape this spring? You may not know how to begin. But working out can be easier than you think. Many everyday activities count as exercise. Take a look at these examples.

- Gardening burns 250 to 500 calories an hour! Digging, trimming trees, raking, and weeding all work your heart and lungs.
- You can turn spring cleaning into a workout. Speed up vacuuming, mopping, and scrubbing to burn more calories.
- Take five-minute stretch breaks throughout the day. For example, stretch or march in place during TV commercials. Or stroll around on your break at work instead of sitting down.

### take a walk!

Looking for exercise that's free and easy? Take a walk! See page 2 for simple ways to sneak walking into your day.



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# Is Emotional Eating Sabotaging Your Weight-Loss Efforts?

If you have trouble losing weight and keeping it off, it may be time to look at why you eat, not just what you eat. An emotion may trigger overeating. This makes it hard to lose weight. Emotional triggers include feeling sad, lonely, stressed, or angry.

## Identifying Emotional Eating

To see if you are an emotional eater, keep a food journal for at least five days. After you eat, write down:

- The time
- What you ate
- How much you ate
- Your feelings

Review the journal. Do you eat more when you feel certain emotions? These are your emotional triggers. Controlling them may help you lose weight.

## Fighting the Problem

Stop emotional eating with these tips:

- **Be prepared.** Sometimes you can guess when a trigger will happen. For example, you may eat junk food when you are stressed.

Prepare for these times. Keep healthy snacks on hand.

- **Find other ways to cope.** If you eat when you're lonely, call a friend or volunteer to help others. If sadness is a trigger, write in a journal or go for a walk when you feel blue.
- **Give yourself healthy rewards.** Overeating can happen when you're joyful, too. Choose nonfood rewards to celebrate an accomplishment. Get a manicure or go out to see a movie.
- **Seek help.** Breaking the cycle of overeating is sometimes hard to tackle alone. Talking with a therapist or even a friend may help. ■



## Walking Works!

Walking is safe, simple, and does not cost a thing. And the health benefits are huge. Taking a walk every day can help you lose weight and prevent diseases, such as diabetes.

You can start by adding more steps to each day. Here are a few ideas:

- Skip the elevator. Take the stairs instead.
- Get off the bus a stop or two early. Walk the extra blocks.
- Choose the farthest spot in the parking lot.
- Take a family walk after dinner instead of watching television.
- Leave your car at home. Do your errands on foot.

Visit [www.bluehealthadvantagene.com](http://www.bluehealthadvantagene.com) to keep track of how much you are walking. Click on "Tools & Programs." Then choose "WalkingWorks." There is



a log you can print out to record your progress. If you do not have access to a computer, call Primary Care+ Member Services. The phone numbers are in the green box to the left.

## Need Help?

If you need help reading this information, please contact Primary Care+ Member Services at **800-424-7097** (Lincoln) or **402-392-4180** (Omaha).

Si necesita ayuda para leer esta información, póngase en contacto con el Servicio para Afiliados de Primary Care+ llamando al **800-424-7097** (Lincoln) o al **402-392-4180** (Omaha).

Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ để đọc thông tin này, xin vui lòng liên lạc Ban Phục Vụ Thành Viên Chương Trình Primary Care+ ở số **800-424-7097** (Lincoln) hoặc **402-392-4180** (Omaha).

Take your kids for a walk in the woods! Visit [www.ngpc.state.ne.us](http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us) to find a hiking trail near you, and explore all that Nebraska state parks have to offer.

# When Your Child Needs Medicine Every Day

Keeping track of your child's medications can be hard. But you are not alone. About one in 10 kids has a chronic illness, such as diabetes or epilepsy. Many of these children need to take medications every day.

To help you manage your child's medications, get your child involved. He or she may enjoy helping and feeling responsible. A fun idea is to create a pill card or poster. This is a visual way to show all the pills your child needs to take each day.

A pill card is a chart. It shows a

picture of each medication and gives simple directions for taking it. It also can list any other important information. A pill card can be a big and colorful poster. This makes it easy for your child to help create it.

As your child gets older, allow him or her to take on more responsibility. A weekly pillbox can help you both stay organized. You can find a pillbox at most drug stores. These boxes allow you to sort medications by each day of the week. Ask your child to help you sort them. ■

Visit [www.ahrq.gov/qual/pillcard/pillcard.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pillcard/pillcard.htm) for examples of pill cards. This website has fun ideas of what to draw on them, as well as good advice.



## fast facts

Sippy cups are a slippery slope to cavities for kids. To protect baby teeth:

- Allow juice or other sugary drinks only with meals.
- At snack time, give your child plain milk or water to drink.
- If your child loves nursing a sippy cup, fill it with water. Do not fill it with juice.

Did you know Medicaid will pay for dentist visits? Medicaid covers a dental exam once every six months for members ages 20 and younger. Schedule your child's visit today!

## Cinnamon-Sprinkled French Toast

Kids can help make this yummy breakfast treat.

**2 large eggs**

**2 tbsp. milk, fat-free**

**½ tsp. ground cinnamon, or to taste**

**2 slices whole wheat bread**

**1 tsp. soft (tub) margarine**

**4 tsp. light pancake syrup**

**Kids:** Crack two eggs into a bowl. Whisk in milk and cinnamon. Dip bread slices, one at a time, into the egg mixture. Make sure both sides are wet. Re-dip, if necessary, until all the egg mixture is absorbed into the bread.

**Adults:** Heat a large, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add butter. Place dipped bread slices in skillet. Cook for 2½ to 3 minutes per side, or until both sides are golden brown.

**Kids:** Drizzle with syrup and serve!

Serves two; serving size is one slice.

**Each serving provides:** Calories 190; Total fat 8 g; Saturated fat 3 g; Fiber 2 g; Sodium 250 mg; Protein 10 g

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This information is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.

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## Preschoolers Need Bike Helmets

Even children who are too young to drive need to be safe on wheels!

If your child rides behind you in a bike seat, fit him or her with a helmet. Kids ages 5 and younger can be hurt if there is an accident. Most of those injuries happen to the head or neck. That can be very dangerous.

When even our youngest riders wear helmets, they are less likely to be hurt. Plus, you are teaching a great lesson. Kids who wear helmets are more likely to keep wearing one as they grow up.

## Important Phone Numbers

Primary Care+  
402-392-4180 (Omaha)  
800-424-7097 (Lincoln)

Primary Care+ TDD  
402-398-3859 (Omaha)  
800-821-4790 (Lincoln)

For a complete physician list,  
contact Primary Care+ Member  
Services.

For practice limitations, call the  
Medicaid Enrollment Center:

Omaha  
888-255-2605

Lincoln  
402-471-7715

## CULTURAL CORNER



## Putting Your Teen Behind the Wheel

It's scary to watch your teenager drive off alone. No wonder you're frightened. Crashes kill more 16- to 20-year-olds than any other cause. And most kids who die in car accidents are driving.

### A Danger Behind the Wheel

Why are teens dangerous drivers? It is mainly because they do not have very much experience. They need time and practice. This helps them develop the skills to be a safe driver.

You play a big role in keeping your teen drivers safe. For a start, you set the rules. Decide when your teens can drive, how many passengers they can take, and what time they need to come home. You may need to punish

teens if they break your rules.

It is also important to be a role model. Be sure to practice safe driving habits yourself.

### Keep Teen Drivers Safe

Here are ways to put your teenager on the road to safe driving:

- Learn your state's laws about teen drivers. For example, some states limit how many passengers a teen driver can carry.
- Make sure your teen wears a seat belt. If he or she does not, take away driving privileges.
- Teach your teen that it is dangerous to drive while drinking, eating, or talking on a cell phone.