



A Healthy Approach Heading Back to School

LiveLifeWell

Good health and good grades go hand in hand. Use these handy hints to help your children LiveLifeWell and have their healthiest school year ever—whether they're entering kindergarten, navigating middle school or heading off to college.

Get physical and sports exams, and make sure required immunizations are up to date.

Click on "Get Tip Sheets" at iLiveLifeWell.com for a "Schedule of Preventive Services for Children." Check with your Abbott health plan provider to see which well-child services are covered.

Note: Remember to check in on your own health by scheduling an annual physical, preventive screenings or lab work.

Address special health concerns.

If your child has a chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or food allergies, talk to his or her principal, teachers and school nurse. Provide written instructions on medication and emergency procedures, as well as up-to-date contact information for you and your family's pediatrician.

Pick and pack a backpack wisely.

Look for one with wide padded shoulder straps and a padded back. Prevent back strain or injury by ensuring a loaded backpack doesn't weigh more than 10-20% of the child's body weight. Always use both shoulder straps to avoid muscle strain and increased spine curvature.

Fix a healthy breakfast.

Give your children the fuel they need for the day with whole-grain cereals and bread, fresh fruit and low-fat dairy products. Kids who eat a good breakfast every day are more likely to stay alert in class, take part in physical activity and maintain an appropriate body weight.

Pack a healthy lunch.

Include lean meats, nuts and fruits and vegetables. For beverages, choose low-fat milk, bottled water or 100% juice. A 12-ounce can of soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories; drinking just one can a day can increase your child's obesity risk by 60%.

Encourage exercise.

Daily physical activity can help boost brain function by increasing the flow of oxygen and promoting the growth of new cells. Turn off the TV and computer and go for a family walk or bike ride. If your child participates in sports, always provide appropriate protective equipment (helmets, wrist pads, knee pads, etc.) to help prevent injuries.

Teach kids how to avoid spreading germs.

Remind children to cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze, wash their hands frequently, and keep fingers away from their eyes, nose and mouth.

Make sure your kids get enough sleep.

Most children ages 5-12 need 10-11 hours of sleep nightly, and adolescents require 9-10 hours. A recent study showed that 25% of high school students are sleep deprived and fall asleep during class at least once a week.

Want to learn more?

You'll find additional Tip Sheets and short informational videos at iLiveLifeWell.com. Topics include staying fit at work, eating right, setting "SMART" goals and more.