



# Health Smart at Head Start

NCWVCAA HS/EHS Health Newsletter

*"Falling into Good Health."*

*Fall 2023*

Fall kicks off the start of falling temperatures and crisp air, the beauty of scenic WV fall leaves, and the start of the holiday season months! But fall often also brings some health concerns such as seasonal colds, flu season, RSV, and more. Check out the tips in this Health Newsletter to try to have a fall full of good fun and good health!

## Fall Health Tips

Fall weather doesn't need to mean you have to accept getting sick. While you might get a cold or a bug, keeping your immune system strong can help you fight it off and make sure your symptoms are minor! Be sure to add the following tips to your daily routine to have the best chance of a Healthy Autumn!

- **Get enough vitamin D.** As the days become shorter, less natural light can lead to a lack of vitamin D. Try to get outside in the sunlight for 15 minutes per day to get your fill.
- **Take a brisk walk.** The cooler fall temps might keep you indoors more.
- **Stay hydrated.** Feeling chilly can dehydrate you much like sweating on a hot day can, as your body works hard to stay warm. Track your water intake to be sure you get enough water.
- **Check your calorie intake.** As we naturally stay indoors more, it's easy to become less active. When we are less active, we need fewer calories. Comfort food is synonymous with cooler temps, yet these dishes can often pack in more calories. Evaluate your input and your output to stay on top of your weight and maintain healthy balance.
- **Be vigilant about handwashing.** This isn't just a fall tip but one that you need to practice all year round!
- **Moisturize your skin.** Harsh temperatures can make your skin dry. Also, you still should be wearing sunscreen.
- **Schedule any check-ups that you may have missed over the summer.** Staying on top of your wellness visits, as well as any vaccines you might need, is key to staying healthy.
- **Keep a schedule.** The cold months can seem to drag on and push us into isolation. Stay on track by scheduling time in your day to do things you like to do.
- **Be kind to yourself.** The holidays can cause weight gain, the shorter days can cause low mood, and the flu season can cause sickness. Listen to your body and give it what it needs, and don't beat yourself up! Try reframing negative thoughts into positive ones.



Speaking of Fall Fun....If Your Fall Season involves festive candies, checkout the below oral health tips!

## THIS HALLOWEEN AVOID A SPOOKY VISIT TO THE DENTIST



### DRINK WATER WITH YOUR TREATS

Candy is dehydrating. Drinking water while you eat can keep you and your kids hydrated and wash away decay-causing sugar.

### BRUSH AFTER SNACKING

But make sure you wait at least 30 minutes. Sugary food can soften enamel. It is important to brush away any sugars, but if you brush too soon, you can damage your teeth.



### EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

Some candies are worse for your teeth than others. Hard or sticky candy and sour candy can cause serious damage, but let's be serious. Most of us aren't going to just go cold turkey. Give your teeth breaks and mix the sugary food with healthier food so your teeth don't stay covered in sugar for long periods of time.

*Plus, eating Halloween candy during or after mealtime can help protect your teeth AND prevent an upset stomach!*



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## Upcoming Health Observances

### ◇ September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Childhood Cancer is the #1 cause of childhood death by disease in the US. 400,000+ children are diagnosed worldwide each year. Age 10 is the average age for diagnosis. Learn More at: [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org)

### ◇ October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

1 in 8 women in the US will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. It is estimated that in 2023, \*297,790\* new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed. Learn More at: [BreastCancer.org](http://BreastCancer.org)

### ◇ November is American Diabetes Month

1 in 10 people have Diabetes (most have Type 2) . 1 in 4 people don't know they have Diabetes. There is no known way to prevent Type 1 Diabetes, but most Type 2 Diabetes can be prevented. Learn More at: [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/)

## Get Your FREE COVID-19 Home Tests

Starting Monday, September 25, 2023, the federal government will send up to four free COVID-19 rapid tests per household to anyone who requests them on [COVIDtests.gov](http://COVIDtests.gov).

The government suggests you don't throw out unused tests even if the expiration date has passed. First, check the lot numbers of any you have on hand at [COVIDtests.gov](http://COVIDtests.gov) — the expiration dates for many have been extended and the website will list them.



# SAVE THE DATE!

The First 2023-2024 Health Advisory meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2023. Health Advisory is a committee of parent representatives, community members, health professionals, and Head Start/ Early Head Start staff that meets bi-annually to discuss program and community health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services, advocate for change, approve HS/EHS health policy changes, and more.

If you are interested in attending the upcoming Health Advisory Meeting, please contact your Family Resource Coordinator/Family Educator or you can email the NCWVCAA Health Program Specialist, Tiffany Pigott at [tiffanypigott@ncwvcaa.org](mailto:tiffanypigott@ncwvcaa.org).

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter or NCWVCAA Health operations, or have suggestions for future health newsletters, feel free to contact the NCWVCAA Health Program Specialist at the below contact information.



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