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ConnectCare News

Your Medicaid and ARKids First Connection to a Medical Home • Winter 2015

The Tooth Fairy Says “Let’s Stop Tooth Decay!”

Childhood tooth decay is the number one chronic childhood sickness. Without proper medical care, childhood tooth decay can have a negative effect that reaches beyond the dental chair. Tooth decay can affect a child’s quality of life by slowing down his growth, development, and self-esteem.

- Tooth decay can lead to malnourishment, infections, surgery and even death.
- Pain and sickness caused by tooth decay can lead to problems in eating, speaking and learning.

Good News - You Can Prevent Tooth Decay!

Tooth decay happens because germs on the teeth take the sugar that your child eats or drinks and turns into acid, which eats a hole in the tooth. To stop decay, brush your child’s teeth every day to lower germs, and limit how often your child eats or drinks sugar, even fruit juice.

There are more things you can do to help lower the decay in your child’s mouth. Fluoride is the best way to keep tooth decay from starting. Have your child drink the fluoridated water that comes out of your kitchen faucet. Use a small amount (the size of a grain of rice for 2 year-olds) of toothpaste with fluoride when you brush your child’s teeth. Visit your dentist often. Have fluoride varnish painted on your child’s teeth.

A new law in Arkansas lets your family doctor paint fluoride varnish on your child’s teeth at Well-Baby exams as soon as the first tooth comes in. Fluoride varnish can lower your child’s decay rate by 30 percent! And it is easy to do! Your doctor or nurse simply “paints” a good tasting varnish on your child’s teeth with a brush. The child feels a grainy material sticking to the teeth. Do not brush your child’s teeth until the next morning and skip foods that might scrape the varnish off the teeth. It’s as easy as that! And it’s covered for Medicaid and ARKids beneficiaries.

If your family doctor doesn’t offer fluoride varnish to you and your child, ask for it!

If you need help finding a Medicaid dentist in your area, call the ConnectCare Dental program at 1-800-322-5580 Monday – Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.



Source: National Children’s Oral Health Foundation and Arkansas Department of Health’s Oral Health Program.

Cheers

Here's to a New You



A new year means new chances and a fresh start! It's the perfect time to make changes that have an impact on your health. Most of us make resolutions but struggle to keep them. We resolve to save more money and spend less, help others, get organized, learn something exciting, worry less and spend more time with our families.

But the most popular resolutions are to get healthy and fit by starting a workout program, eating better and stopping tobacco products. Choosing to lead a healthier lifestyle is more than what foods you eat or how much you walk. It's about self-improvement and reaching goals that will have a major effect on your health and well-being.

Here are 3 small steps to help keep your resolutions and build good habits that will last throughout the year.

1. Start small.

A tiny habit is easier to stick to. Do you want to work out more often this year? Start with just 10 pushups a day or a short jog around the neighborhood — something so quick that there's no excuse not to do it. Once a habit begins to feel natural, increase the amount of time and effort you spend.

2. Fit new habits together with a current habit.

Choose a habit that's already second nature, then schedule your new habit to begin right after. Think about your day: what habits do you have that can be extended or changed? If you want to read more, place a book next to your cup of morning coffee. Adding a new activity to a current habit will make it easier to become a habit too.

3. Practice makes perfect.

You will need time before your resolution becomes a part of your life. Take steps to help you stay on track. Ask a friend to help keep you going, set alarms on your phone as reminders throughout the day or mark your successes on a calendar. The more you practice your new habit, the more quickly it will become a part of your life.



Taking Charge of Your Health: You have the Power

Did you know that some cancers can be prevented?

Some cancers can be treated if it's found early — while it's small and hasn't spread. That's why cancer check-ups and tests to find cancer could save your life. That means that you have the power to decrease your chance of getting cancer!

There are also easy steps you can take to stay well and lower your risk of certain cancers. These steps include eating healthy foods, staying active, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol and not using tobacco.

Tests from your doctor can find some cancers early. Many cancers that are found early can be treated with success. A few cancers can even be prevented with cancer screening tests. To learn more, visit the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345.

Want to Start Quitting - Today? We Can Help You Quit Tobacco Now



Call the Arkansas Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). It's private and it's free.

When tobacco users call, they will get:

- Free, private, non-judgmental expert support from a Quit Coach® to help make a plan to quit tobacco.
- Ongoing Quit Coach® support by phone or email, tailored to the needs of all tobacco users, including smokeless tobacco users. Women who are pregnant can join a special program with extra benefits.
- Use of Web Coach™, an interactive, online community that offers tools, social support, and facts about quitting.
- Customized motivational emails sent throughout the quitting process.

- Help with finding the best way to quit. Some quitting aids can be sent straight to the tobacco user's home, like free patches and lozenges (while supplies last).
- Referral to local resources and/or benefits offered through employers or health plans.
- Printed Quit Guides – a series of workbooks that offer guidance and support throughout the quitting process.

The Arkansas Tobacco Quitline is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Services are available in English, Spanish and additional languages as needed, including Marshallese.

Let's Get Moving: Tips to be More Active

Being physically active is important for your health. Adults who are active are less likely to get some long-term illnesses than adults who are not active. **It's one of the best ways to help reduce stress and take your mind off your problems.** Physical activity is any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy. People of all ages, shapes, sizes and skills can benefit from an active life.

Start activities slowly and build up over time. This will help prevent injury and help you stick to your plan! Once you get used to being active, raise your workout time and difficulty.

Get your heart pumping. For health benefits, do at least 2½ hours each week of physical activity that uses moderate effort. A few examples are brisk walking, biking, swimming and skating. Spread activities over the week, but do them at least 10 minutes at a time.

Strength-train for healthy muscles and bones. Do strengthening activities twice a week. Examples of activities that build strength are lifting weights, doing push-ups and sit-ups, working with resistance bands or heavy gardening. **Be active your way! Mix it up** - there are endless ways to be active, like walking, biking, dancing, martial arts,

gardening and playing ball. Try out many activities to see what you like best and add variety. Every little bit helps! Take the stairs instead of the elevator, go for a 10-minute walk on your lunch break or park further away from work and walk.

Set goals and track your progress. Plan your physical activity ahead of time and keep records. Use a journal or your phone to record your activities. Build a plan that is right for you.

Have fun! Use the buddy system. Physical activity is more fun with others than doing it alone. Invite friends or family to join you. Join a walking group, go to fitness classes at a gym or play with the kids outside. It can help you feel better about you!



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HELPLINE

Call 1-800-275-1131
TDD 1-800-285-1131
www.seeyourdoc.org

ConnectCare Helpline can:

- Assign or change your doctor
- Refer you for help if we cannot help you
- Tell you if your Medicaid is still active

DENTAL PROGRAM

Call 1-800-322-5580
TDD 1-800-285-1131

ConnectCare Dental Program can help:

- Find a Medicaid dentist in your area
- Schedule dental appointments
- Assist with transportation (Medicaid and ARKids First A only)
- Remind you of appointments
- Reschedule missed appointments

Ask the Expert:



How many times or how often can I change my doctor?

You can change your doctor as many times as you need for any reason. However, you can't assign a doctor in the morning and change it that afternoon if you have seen the doctor that day.

The doctor has to have time to run a claim through the system. DHS would like to encourage you to remain with your current PCP for as long as you can so your doctor will get to know you and provide the best care possible.

Source: Department of Human Services