



SPINA BIFIDA CLINIC NEWSLETTER

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Mimi is in the office every
Monday and Wednesday.

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If you have received this newsletter by mail and wish to receive it electronically, call or email Mimi, and she will add you to the Spina Bifida Clinic email list.

SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

We encourage your comments and input. Please contact us to share your story or if you have a question or concern you feel should be addressed in an upcoming issue of the Spina Bifida Clinic Newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

Update from Mimi Ardis

This year continues to amaze me. Two weeks of freezing temps, snow upon snow upon snow, the ever changing and evolving COVID saga. But..... spring forward happened and more daylight at the end of my day makes me so very happy. I feel more energized and don't feel like I should be in bed at 5 p.m. because it's pitch black outside.

Here is some exciting news: Those age 12 and older with spina bifida and their care givers are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. **Remember: 12- 17-year-olds can only receive the Pfizer vaccine.** This is straight from the Illinois Spina Bifida Association web site:

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

Any individual age 12 and older is now eligible for the vaccine.

You have to have an appointment to get the vaccine. Here are some links to find a vaccine site near you: <https://www.impact4hc.com/vaccine-general-public>

Another resource for vaccine sites: [Vaccination Location \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov/vaccination-locations)

OSF is also offering appointments to all who are eligible: [osfhealthcare.org/vaccine](https://www.osfhealthcare.org/vaccine)

You can also go to [vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org) to find a vaccine site close to your home.

Here is a link on the CDC website regarding persons with a latex allergy and the COVID vaccine. It is advised that if you do have a latex allergy and are getting the vaccine, you should take your epi pen with you as a precaution. Get informed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>

Here is a link for the letter from Gov. Pritzger stating that caregivers of persons with spina bifida can get the COVID vaccine without waiting for their "group" to be available.

https://illinoisap.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IDHS_Letter_January-21.pdf

Check out the Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/2583258388573318/?ref=share.

On a sad note, I am sorry to say that Dr. Sue Caldecott-Johnson will be leaving in June. Unsure when her last day to see patients will be at this time. She will be moving to Galveston, Texas, to start up a program at Shriners Texas. Wish her luck in her new endeavor! As we say good bye to Dr. Sue, we welcome Dr. Paul Noh to Pediatric Urology!

To continue on from the last newsletter concerning worry, stress, and fear, this newsletter will focus on leading a healthier lifestyle through diet and exercise.

Stay safe and stay healthy. Call me anytime you have any needs: (309) 624-4064.

Mimi

Live. Life. Healthy



There are so many things that factor into living life healthy. This article will focus on two of the most important factors. We must eat healthy. We must “move” healthy.

Let’s start with eating healthy. To vary your choices, an understanding of the food groups is a good place to start. The main five food groups are: fruits and vegetables; dairy; starchy foods; protein; and fat.

Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals. They are high in fiber, low in fat, and most are low in calories. You should have 4-5 servings of fruits and/or vegetables daily. Fruits can include fresh, frozen, dried, or canned (in 100% juice). Vegetables can be steamed, fresh, sautéed, or roasted. Make half your plate veggies and fruit. Limit fruit juice to 100% pure and no more than 1 cup daily.

Dairy products provide vitamins and are a good source of protein. They contain calcium, which is essential for bone health. They are rich in vitamin B12. Examples of dairy include: cow/goat/sheep milk, soy or nut milks, yogurt, and cheese. Choose low fat or fat free milk, yogurt, and cheese. These have the same nutrients as full fat dairy products but contain much less saturated fat. Choose unsweetened soy or nut milks. Children ages 2-3 need 2 cups of milk daily. Children 4-8 years of age- 2 ½ cups daily. Older children, teens, and adults- 3 cups daily.

Starch and carbohydrates include potatoes, rice, bread, and pastas. Starch is a good source of energy and is required to fuel the body. Carbohydrates contain calcium, iron, fiber, and other vitamins. Whole grain foods take longer to digest, making us feel fuller. When we feel full, we eat less. Brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole grain breads, oatmeal, and popcorn are examples of whole grain foods. Read labels! Choose products that name one of the following ingredients first on its list. Look for: whole wheat, brown rice, bulgur, buckwheat, oatmeal, whole oats, or whole rye. Be wary of foods labeled as: multigrain, stone-ground, 100% wheat, cracked wheat, seven-grain, or bran. These are usually not 100% whole-grain products and may not contain *any* whole grain. Persons with digestion issues should be cautious when eating whole grain foods.

Proteins are rich in vitamins and minerals. Fish, eggs, meat, “pulses,” nuts, seeds, and vegetable based, such as tofu and bean curd, are examples of protein. Examples of pulses include beans, peas, and lentils and can “bulk” up dishes and replace meat in recipes. Oil rich fish such as salmon is high in vitamins A and D and omega-3 fatty acids. Meat is high in vitamin B12. Vegetable proteins are low fat alternatives and can replace meat in many recipes. Choose lean cuts of meat. Twice a week make seafood your protein of choice. Eggs in any form are a great source of protein.

Be mindful of their preparation. Do not use a lot of butter or oil when cooking eggs. Use a non-stick cooking spray. Peanut butter is a protein but is high in fat and calories. An alternative is powdered peanut butter: PB2 or PB Fit. These have 70% less calories than regular peanut butter and only 1.5 gm of fat per serving.

Fats include oils, margarine and butter. Some fats are recommended. Plant-based oils can help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Use a vegetable or olive oil when cooking. Choose oil based sauces instead of ones with butter, cream, or cheese. Trim visible fat off meat and remove skin off chicken prior to cooking.

Other things to consider: use spices and herbs to flavor food and minimize added salt. Use natural sweeteners to minimize added sugar. Do not drink regular soda (we all remember Dr. Reid's most famous advice - no bubbles of any kind!); and drink water, water, and more water. Follow the food pyramid: eat more foods from the bottom rows and less as you go up the pyramid. Here are examples of traditional and nutritionally improved pyramids.



From Unites States Department of Agriculture: choosemyplate.gov here are some kid-friendly fruit and veggie ideas:

1. Smoothie creations: blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or mild with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, or canned fruit. Try bananas, berries, peaches, and/or pineapple. You can substitute frozen fruit and skip the ice.
2. Delicious dippers: kids love to dip their foods. Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, or cauliflower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.
3. Caterpillar kabobs: assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers, or tomatoes.
4. Personalized pizzas: set up a pizza making station. Use whole wheat English muffins, bagels, or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and cut up vegetables or fruits for toppings. Let kids choose their own favorites. Pop the pizzas in the oven to warm.

5. Fruity peanut butterfly: start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.
6. Frosty fruits: put fresh fruits such as rinsed melon chunks or grapes in the freezer. Make “popsicles” by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing.
7. Bugs on a log: use celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or cherries, depending on what bugs you want!
8. Homemade trail mix: use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts, or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple, cherries, apricots, or raisins. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.
9. Potato person: decorate half a baked potato. Use sliced cherry tomatoes, peas, and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.
10. Put kids in charge: ask your child to name a new veggie or fruit creation. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.

From choosemyplate.gov, here are some other tips for healthy snacking with kids in mind:

1. Save time by slicing veggies and store in the refrigerator and serve with hummus. Clean/rinse fruit and store in snack size bags for easy access to healthy snacks.
2. Low-fat or soy/nut milks are a healthy drink.
3. Offer whole grain snacks: popcorn (not to children under 6 years of age), whole-wheat breads, whole-oat cereals. Limit refined-grain products: snack bars, cakes, and sweetened cereals.
4. Choose protein foods: unsalted nuts and seeds, hummus or other bean dips, and hard-cooked eggs. Store hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.
5. Control serving sizes by using snack-size bags.
6. Consider convenience: single-serving containers of yogurt or wrapped string cheese can be enough of a snack.
7. Swap out sugar. Keep healthier foods handy so kids avoid cookies, pastries, or candies between meals. Add seltzer water to a ½ cup of 100% fruit juice instead of soda.
8. Prepare homemade goodies. Add dried fruits like apricots or raisins and reduce the amount of sugar in the recipe. Adjust recipes that include fats like butter or shortening by using unsweetened applesauce or prune puree for half the amount of fat.

Now let’s talk about “moving” healthy. Exercise is recommended for all persons, including those with disabilities. Exercise releases neurotransmitters (chemical messenger) in our brains. Endorphins, dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin are the main ones. These trigger positive feelings, decrease stress hormones, and alleviate mild depression.

There are numerous health benefits associated with exercise. These include improvements in: weight, cognition, bone health, sleep, physical function, and quality of life. Also included are lower risks of: depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, weight gain, and falls.

So a regular/routine exercise program will positively affect not only your body but also your mind!

In an article *Exercise Barrier Severity and Perseverance of Active Youth With Physical Disabilities* by Kang, Zhu, Ragan, and Frogley, they report that surveys consistently show that persons with disabilities are less likely to be physically active.

- The main exercise barriers that adults report are: lack of self-discipline, time, and motivation, and their physical condition related to their disability.
- The main exercise barriers that youth report are: lack of time; pain or discomfort, lack of a place to exercise with friends, weather, and people's misconception of their physical condition or ability.

Exercise perseverance is a person's ability to overcome exercise/activity barriers. Know what your barriers are and work on a plan to remove or minimize them to increase your exercise perseverance and get moving.

The following information is from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth. The website also includes resources and program information regarding different disabilities.

Things to take into consideration if you have a disability include:

1. Find activities that are "right" for you and find ways to increase and incorporate the activities into your lifestyle
2. Start slowly and increase activity times as tolerated
3. Aerobic activities should be part of your routine (exercise that make you breathe harder and your heart rate increase)
4. Be aware that you may have to modify, adapt, or need assistance with your exercise program/equipment
5. Most importantly....get moving, some physical activity is better than no physical activity!

There are so many ways to get exercise. These are examples of aerobic exercise: wheelchair basketball, tennis, football, or softball; adapted hockey; wheeling oneself in wheelchair; water therapy, and/or aerobics, or swimming laps; hand-crank bicycling; seated volleyball; rowing; horseback riding; dancing; walking; hiking; and/or skiing. Here are examples of muscle and bone strengthening exercise: running, skipping, jumping rope; gymnastics; climbing playground equipment, ropes, or trees; exercises with resistance bands or weights; some forms of yoga.

Here are ways to help your child get physical:

1. Start young
2. Provide time for structured and unstructured play
3. Be a good role model and provide praise and encouragement
4. Teach them skills required for safe activity: protective gear, proper equipment, etc
5. Expose them to a variety of different activities: team or individual sports. Younger children should participate in noncompetitive activities and ones that do not require above average athletic skills.

The US Department of Health and Human Services (website: <https://health.gov/moveyourway>) recommend the following activity guidelines:



Adults need a mix of physical activity to stay healthy.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity*

Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.



AND



If you prefer vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (like running), aim for at least **75 minutes a week**.

If that's more than you can do right now, **do what you can**. Even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. **What's your move?**



How much physical activity do kids and teens need?

At least 60 minutes every day.

Most of that time can be **moderate-intensity aerobic activity** — anything that gets their heart beating faster counts.



And at least 3 days a week, encourage them to step it up to **vigorous-intensity aerobic activity**, so they're breathing fast and their heart is pounding.



As part of their daily 60 minutes, kids and teens also need:

Muscle-strengthening activity

at least 3 days a week



Anything that makes their muscles work harder counts — like climbing or swinging on the monkey bars.

Bone-strengthening activity

at least 3 days a week



Bones need pressure to get stronger. Running, jumping, and other weight-bearing activities all count.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. **What's your move?**



Included in the CDC website is a PDF file for *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition*



