

Ask A Nurse Newsletter

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What is the "Ask a Nurse" Program?

The ASK A NURSE program is staffed by University of Delaware nursing faculty and graduate and undergraduate nursing students.

Our mission is to provide health and wellness education and programs to children and families.

Reach us at askanurse@udel.edu



National Girls and Women in Sports Day! February 9, 2005

Celebrating National Girls and Women in Sports Day on February 9, 2005, is a time to honor females in sports, and it is also the perfect time to take a look at how you can empower girls to have a healthy lifestyle. Medical and health professionals now know the importance of physical activity to one's overall well being. And, they believe it's best to get into a fitness routine at an early age; girls are no exception.

Here are some of the benefits of adopting and maintaining an active lifestyle:

- Improve strength and endurance
- Help build healthy bones and muscle
- Help control weight
- Reduce anxiety and stress and increase self-esteem

Remind girls that physical activity is fun-especially when friends or family do it together! Playing a sport or learning a new exercise can help girls develop new friendships, learn new skills, increase confidence, and stay in shape

February is National Dental Hygiene Month

How You Can Keep Your Teeth Healthy:

- **Brush at least twice a day** - after breakfast and before bedtime. If you can, brush after lunch or after sweet snacks. Brushing properly breaks down plaque.
- Brush all of your teeth, not just the front ones. Spend some time on the teeth along the sides and in the back. Brush away from your gums.
- Take your time while brushing. Spend at least 3 minutes each time you brush. If you have trouble keeping track of the time, use a timer or play a recording of a song you like to help pass the time.
- Be sure your toothbrush has **soft bristles** (the package will tell you if they're soft). Ask your parent to help you get a new toothbrush every 3 months. Some toothbrushes come with bristles that change color when it's time to change them.
- Learn how to floss your teeth, which is a very important way to keep them healthy. It feels weird the first few times you do it, but pretty soon you'll be a pro. Slip the dental floss between each tooth and up along the gum line. The floss gets rid of food that's hidden where your toothbrush can't get it, no matter how well you brush.

It's also important to visit the dentist twice a year. Besides checking for signs of cavities or gum disease, the dentist will help keep your teeth extra clean, and he or she can help you learn the best way to brush and floss.

It's not just brushing and flossing that keeps your teeth healthy - you also need to be careful about what you eat and drink. Remember, the plaque on your teeth is just waiting for that sugar to arrive. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and drink water instead of soda. And don't forget to smile!

**Taking Care
of Your Teeth**



Follow these simple steps to reduce the risk of SIDS in your childcare center or home

- Always place babies on their backs to sleep in cribs that meet Consumer Product Safety Commission crib safety standards
- Locate the crib in a smoke free room that is at a temperature that does not overheat the baby's sleeping room
- Do not overdress the baby to sleep
- Keep pillows, stuffed animals, bumpers and toys out of the crib
- If a light blanket is needed, make sure the baby's feet are at the foot of the crib and the blanket is tucked in on all sides and underneath the arms of the baby, not higher than the chest
- Create a safe sleep policy in your center or home to help you talk about BACK TO SLEEP with families and staff

Life Without Lice

Sure, lice aren't so nice, but there are things you can do to keep them away. To help prevent lice:

- Avoid close physical contact with a kid who has lice. This doesn't mean you guys can't talk, but avoid touching and especially putting your heads together!
- Don't try on hats that belong to other kids.
- **Never** share a comb or brush. Use your own, and don't lend them to anyone else.
- If you wear headbands, hair clips, ribbons, barrettes, or other hair accessories, be sure to keep those to yourself, too.
- Always use your own sleeping bag and pillow when sleeping away from home.



Boosting Your Self-Esteem

Of course it's OK to have ups and downs in your feelings, but having low self-esteem isn't OK. Feeling like you're not important can make you sad and can keep you from trying new things. It can keep you from making friends or hurt how you do at school. Having strong self-esteem is also a very big part of growing up; as you get older and face tough decisions - especially under peer pressure - the more self-esteem you have, the better. It's important to know you're worth a lot.

If you think you might have low self-esteem, try talking to an adult you trust about it. He or she may be able to help you come up with some good ideas for building your self-esteem. In the meantime, here are a few things that you can try to increase your self-esteem:

- Remember that your body is your own, no matter what shape, size, or color it is. If you are worried about your weight or size, you can check with your doctor to make sure that things are OK.
- Remember that there are things about yourself you can't change - such as skin color and shoe size - and you should accept and love these things because they are part of you.
- Remind yourself of things about your body that are cool, like, "My legs are strong and I can skate really well."
- When you hear negative comments in your head, mentally tell yourself to stop. The critical voice inside you will soon lose its power.
- Give yourself three compliments every day. Don't just say, "I'm so great." Be specific about something good about yourself, like, "I was a good friend to Jill today" or "I did better on that test than I thought I would." While you're at it, before you go to bed every night, list three things in your day that really made you happy.

By focusing on the good things you do and all your great qualities, you learn to love and accept yourself, and that's the main ingredient for strong self-esteem. Even if you've got room for improvement (and who doesn't?), realizing that you're valuable and important helps your self-esteem to shine.

