

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

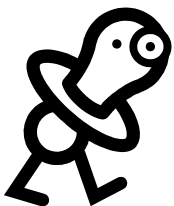


Pacifiers for Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends giving baby a pacifier at bedtime and sleep time to help prevent SIDS. In a study, authors found a decrease in SIDS when a pacifier was used during sleep time.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/peds.2004-2631v1>,

For this purpose the authors suggest the pacifier is to be used after 1 month of age when breastfeeding is firmly established and not used after 1 year to avoid dental problems. Remember to place babies on their back not on their side and in their crib to sleep.



Lead Safety

In an effort to reduce cases of lead poisoning among young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is recommending that all kids get tested for lead when they are 1 and 2 years old. Young children with lead poisoning usually get it from eating chips of lead paint. Though lead content in paint is regulated today, many older homes still have it on the walls, and when it flakes off, infants and toddlers may put the paint chips in their mouths. Kids also can get lead poisoning by inhaling lead particles in dust that can come off walls that are covered with lead-based paint. According to the AAP, an estimated 25% of homes with kids who are 6 years old or younger have significant amounts of lead in contaminated paint, dust, soil, and plumbing. Early warning signs of high lead levels or chronic lead poisoning include:

- Tiredness and irritability
- Muscle and joint pain
- Headaches
- Stomach aches or cramps
- Loss of appetite
- Constipation
- Vomiting
- Seizures

Lead also has been linked to anemia, severe colic, attention problems, hyperactivity, learning disabilities, and mental retardation. But often there are no symptoms at all, and the only way to find out for certain whether a child has lead poisoning is through a blood test.

Treatment for lead poisoning depends on how much lead is in the child's blood. If it's a small amount, the child may just have to take iron supplements. If it's a severe case, and the lead levels are high, a child might be hospitalized so that he or she can receive intravenous medication to reduce lead levels in the blood.

Tips from the American Dental Association

The American Dental Association (ADA) advises parents to teach children the importance of oral hygiene at an early age, so when they grow up they will continue good habits that will contribute to their overall health. Oral hygiene, just like diet and exercise, should be factored together when teaching children how to keep themselves healthy.

- After each feeding, clean the baby's gums with a clean wet gauze pad or washcloth.
- When teeth start to appear, brush them with a child's size toothbrush and plain water.
- Begin flossing when at least two teeth begin to touch.
- Start dental visits by the child's first birthday. Make visits regularly. If you think your child has dental problems, take the child to the dentist as soon as possible.
- Brush teeth of children over age two with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and make sure to floss daily..
- Children should be supervised while brushing to keep them from swallowing the toothpaste.
- Until they are six or seven years old, continue to brush your children's teeth twice a day with a child's size toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Continue to assist with flossing as needed..
- By age six or seven, children should be able to brush their own teeth twice a day but often require supervision until about age 10 or 11, to make sure they are doing a thorough job.
- Adolescents may need reminders about practicing good oral hygiene, the importance of regular dental check ups and making nutritious food and beverage choices.

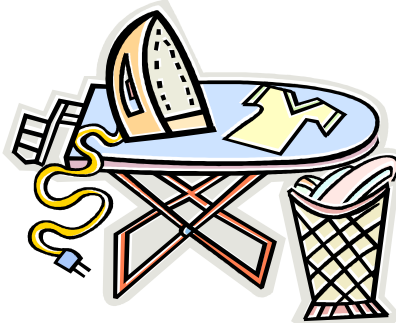
More Information About Lead Safety

Each year, unsafe blood lead levels are detected in 300,000 kids between the ages of 1 and 5, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, the incidence of lead poisoning has dropped dramatically since the 1970s. Aggressive lead testing and the ban on leaded gasoline, the regulation of smokestack emissions, and the elimination of lead-based paints have helped reduce the risk, according to the AAP.

If you suspect that you might have lead-based paint on your walls, use a wet cloth to wipe windowsills and walls. Watch out for water damage that can make paint peel. Also, there can be lead in the soil around your house, so it's important to wash your hands, and to help your child develop good hand-washing habits. Be sure that your child washes his or her hands before eating, after playing outside, and at bedtime. If your child is showing any symptoms of lead poisoning, call your child's health care provider.

Burn Awareness Month **Burn Prevention information is** **available from Shriners** **Hospitals**

Most serious burn injuries are preventable. The Shriner's "Burn Prevention Tips" can help keep you and your kids safe. Read it at the website or, [request a free printed copy](http://www.shrinershq.org/prevention/index.html).
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