

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



The weather outside is frightful, but finding time for physical activity is delightful!

When the weather cools and the season gets festive your free time gets shorter, use the tips below to help manage your daily fitness routine.

- * Escape the crowd and take a brisk walk.
- * Share your workout time with visiting relatives. Are you at different fitness levels? See what activities you can share and be active together.
- * Incorporate walks around the mall when doing your holiday shopping.
- * Stay focused on your goal: a healthy lifestyle.
- * Exercise to holiday music.
- * Make it fun and a family affair.
- * Keep a record of your activities. Reward yourself!



Beat the Blues this Holiday Season

The holidays are a time full of joy, good cheer and optimistic hopes for a new year, but many people experience seasonal "blues." What's important to know is that there are steps you can take to help beat the blues this holiday season.

Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put entire focus on just one day (i.e., Thanksgiving Day) remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (time-wise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

Volunteer. Doing something for others is fulfilling and releases tension.

Enjoy activities that are free, such as driving around to look at holiday decorations; going window shopping without buying; making a snowperson with children.

Refrain from excessive drinking. This will only intensify any problems or tensions. Alcohol is a depressant and will only exacerbate depression.

Experience new holiday celebrations -- be creative and have fun!

Spend time with supportive and caring people such as family or friends. Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you have not heard from for awhile.

Save time -- don't take on too many responsibilities. Divvy up the jobs, and kill two birds with one stone. Let others share in the fun of holiday preparations.

Pace yourself and stay structured. Don't overdo it with shopping and parties. You don't have to go to everything. But, participate in activities you know you will enjoy.

Talk about fond memories and missed loved ones and remember only the good times

Save time for yourself! Take time to relax and enjoy!



New Years Resolutions

Making resolutions, like exercising more or eating better, are a common tradition, but unfortunately, some people may not keep the resolutions that they make on New Year's Eve.

One thing that can help with sticking to your resolutions, especially if they haven't even started making any resolutions, is to get them to choose small things to do, so they will be more likely to achieve their goals.

Some other resolutions you might consider making with your kids can include:

- Eating one extra vegetable each week.
- Eating one extra fruit each week.
- Drinking one less soda or fruit drink each week.
- Drinking an extra glass of milk each week.
- Eating one less snack each week.
- Reading one extra chapter in a book each week.
- Watching 15 minutes less TV each week.
- Playing 15 minutes less video games each week.

Parents can make any of these resolutions too. Another good one for parents is to spend an extra 15 minutes a week playing or reading to their kids, etc.

Enjoy the holidays and look forward to the new you in the New Year to come.

Happy 2005!!!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

What you do before you become pregnant can help your baby to have a healthy start in life. If you are planning to become pregnant, you can make choices that are good for you and your baby.

10 steps to prevent birth defects and have a healthy pregnancy!

Take Folic Acid—Folic acid is a B vitamin that helps the baby's brain and spinal cord develop properly and the best time to take it is before you become pregnant. Take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

Have a Pre-Pregnancy Checkup—A pre-pregnancy checkup is a good time to discuss with your doctor or nurse any medical conditions you have that may effect your pregnancy.

Avoid Smoking and Secondhand Smoke—Tobacco can harm you and your baby. Cigarette smoking can cause serious health problems for your baby before and after it is born. Also smoke from other people's cigarettes can be harmful to you and your baby.

Stop Using Illegal Drugs—Street drugs can cause serious physical and mental problems in your baby. It is important to stop and stay off illegal drugs before you become pregnant and throughout your pregnancy.

Do not Drink Alcohol—Drinking any kind of alcohol, puts your baby at risk for serious physical and mental health problems. There is no safe limit of drug and alcohol use during pregnancy!

Avoid the use of Certain Medications and Herbal Remedies and Supplements—Sometimes drugs, herbs, and even excess doses of vitamins can be harmful to your baby and should not be taken while you are pregnant. Let your doctor or nurse know all medications that you take.

Be Aware of your Family's Health History—Let your doctor know the family medical history of you and the father of your baby.

Eat a Well-balanced Diet and Maintain a Healthy Weight—Try to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods. A balanced diet and keeping your weight in a normal range is good for you and your baby's health.

Know that Certain Infections Can Harm your Baby—You should avoid handling cat litter while pregnant, you should wear gloves when gardening, and you should avoid eating raw meats, eggs, and unpasteurized milk products. It is also important for your doctor to review your immunity to childhood illnesses, or your exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Know if you are Exposed to any Potential Hazards—Certain substances found in your home or workplace may be harmful to your baby.