

# Kaiser Santa Clara Pediatrics Department Parent Advisory Committee Newsletter

Issue 3 – Winter (Jan-Mar) 2010



## ***Make New Year Resolutions a Family Event***

Happy New Year! Now that the Holidays are over it's time to focus on those New Year resolutions. Research shows that about 45% of adults make New Year resolutions. Of those resolution makers 75% of them make it past the first week and 46% are still going strong after 6 months. Statistics show that by making resolutions or goals a person is 10 times more likely to achieve a positive outcome. This year we encourage you to get your entire family involved in making healthy resolutions. Family support is the key to any success! To get you started The American Academy of Pediatrics website has posted a list of 21 Healthy New Year Resolutions for preschoolers on up to teens, which are all great ideas. Check them out at the link below:

### *The AAP -- 21 Healthy NY Resolutions*

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jankidstips.cfm>

## ***Healthy Choices = Healthy Kids***

As parents we must constantly adapt in our quest to keep our children healthy. We must learn how to help a baby transition to solids and then, how to convince a preschooler that candy is not an essential food group. Later, we must help our children maintain healthy eating habits while also learning effective time-management and how to cope with peer pressure and navigate adolescence and beyond. At times the list can seem endless but yet, arguably, the best gift we can give our children is to help them learn how to make healthy choices for themselves.

This year, no matter what health related lessons you need to teach your kids, remember there are numerous resources to help you achieve your goals and **teaching healthy choices** can be as simple as **1, 2, 3...**

### *1) Pause, take a breath*

We all know the benefits of eating well, and getting enough sleep and exercise. It is also important to take time to relax, but somehow in our busy lives it can be hard to find the time to do it all – at these times it is

particularly important to stop, take a few breaths and take stock. Assess what you already do well, what is no longer essential in your busy day and then high-light areas where you can make small, sustainable changes such as, committing to sit less and walk more or eat 5 portions of vegetables a day – then work together to make it happen. Taking time to talk and assess what is important, and then deciding what actions you can take as a family to improve your collective health is an important first step towards teaching your child how to make healthy choices and is often more effective than telling your child what they need to do to be healthy.

### *2) Get ready...*

Gather your resources and highlight area's where you might need information or assistance to ensure success, then work together to make a realistic plan that you can act on. This could be as simple as using a little imagination and creativity in food preparation to persuade a toddler to eat their vegetables or it could require, a longer term, more comprehensive plan, for example, if an older child is struggling with depression. Either way, Kaiser Health Education has numerous ways to help you including – **Kaiser's Kid Wisdom**\* a site with games and puzzles, including information about educational theatre programs designed to provide health information in a fun and creative way to children of all ages.

[\\*http://info.kp.org/richmedia/kidWisdom/?kp\\_shortcut\\_referrer=kp.org/kidwisdom](http://info.kp.org/richmedia/kidWisdom/?kp_shortcut_referrer=kp.org/kidwisdom)

### *3) Go...*

Once you have all your resources in place, and your family on board with the planning, it is easy to achieve success. This success in its' self, coupled with the improved health you are now enjoying, could be reward enough but also consider taking a little time together to celebrate your families achievement –because laughing and having fun together can also be good for you and your child's health!

## **Flu Season has Arrived**

### **What is the flu?**

Symptoms of influenza include fever, chills, muscle aches, headache and/or cough. In most cases, the illness lasts three to seven days.

### **Is it a Cold or the Flu?**

Information provided from [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

- \* Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses.
- \* Flu and the common cold have similar symptoms (e.g. fever, sore throat). It can be difficult to tell the difference between the two.
- \* Your doctor can give you a flu test within the first few days of your illness to determine whether you have the flu.
- \* In general the flu is worse than the common cold.
- \* Symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense with the flu.
- \* Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose
- \* Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

For more detailed information about the 2009/2010 flu season log onto [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or [www.kp.org](http://www.kp.org). In addition, the Kaiser Advice line and/or your physician are just a phone call away should you have specific flu or cold symptom questions.

## **Managing a Child's Healthcare Needs**

Nearly 10% of children in California have a special health care need. It may be asthma, allergies, autism, cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, diabetes, epilepsy, developmental disabilities, or other health condition. While finding information about the condition is easier in these days of the internet, finding the most useful, reliable information is often a challenge.

Your child's pediatrician and specialists are the natural, primary sources of information about your child's condition. Yet, other resources exist that can also be useful. Many parents find the relevant national association (e.g. Epilepsy Foundation of America, or Juvenile Diabetes Association) very valuable in providing information on the symptoms, causes, treatments available, and future course of the condition. For links to these organizations and others

see <http://www.access-board.gov/links/disability.htm/> or <http://www.disabilityresources.org/SPECIFIC.html>.

For practical information on managing a child's healthcare needs, the Medical Home Information site sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatricians provides tools that include:

- Tips on communicating with doctors, teachers and other professionals
- Guidance for families on creating care notebooks to help organize important information regarding their child in a useful manner that makes it easy to find and share information with physicians, teachers, or caregivers.
- Downloadable forms for tracking your child's medications, treatments or hospitalizations.
- A list of Family-to-Family Health Information Centers throughout the country. F2F HICs are non-profit organizations that help families of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and the professionals who serve them.

[http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/tools/care\\_notebook.html](http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/tools/care_notebook.html)

And of course, don't overlook the valuable books and journals available at your local public library.

## **Get Involved**

The Kaiser Pediatric PAC group welcomes input from all parents on:

- Any areas where you feel the PAC group could work with the Pediatric Department to enrich the overall experience.
- Any areas which, as parents, you are experiencing difficulty and would welcome extra information.
- Any stories about doctors, and/or pediatric staff that have provided outstanding care.

The committee can be reached by completing a suggestion / comment card located at Dept.190 check-in desk or by contacting Erin McCroskey, RN at 408-851-1127.