

Back-To-School Health And Safety Tips

(NAPSA)—Back-to-school kicks off an exciting time for all family members. But between classes, after-school activities, homework and parents' responsibilities, keeping the family healthy and smiling can take some planning. Here are some tips to help your family stay on a healthy track throughout the entire school year:

Walk the walk

The first walk to school can cause some anxiety for young children and their parents. Relieve your child's stress by walking the route a few times before the school year starts. It will make both of you feel better as well as give you some quality time together.

Gear up for sports

An injury can take the fun out of gym class and after-school sports but proper sporting gear can help. Sprained ankles can be avoided by wearing sport-specific sneakers, and exercise clothes designed to keep perspiration from skin can help regulate body temperature. Additionally, using a mouth guard can protect teeth from getting chipped by a fly ball or errant puck or hockey stick.

Check in with your pediatrician

Children who feel sick will be less likely to do well in class. Keep everyone on track this fall by making appointments with their pediatrician to ward off illnesses like the common cold but also to detect vision and hearing problems that children may not know how to express to you.

Keep smiles healthy

According to a report by the U.S. Surgeon General's office, oral-health related problems cause the loss of 51 million school hours per year, more than any other childhood illness. Help combat oral decay by getting children to brush for the recommended two minutes twice a day and using proper brushing and flossing techniques. This is also a great time to visit



A visit to the dentist should be part of every child's back-to-school routine.

the dentist for a semi-annual check-up to catch any problems and polish kids' pearly whites. For more educational information on the fight against tooth decay and to find out about oral care initiatives available in your community through Crest Healthy Smiles 2010, visit www.cresthealthy smiles.com.

Encourage healthy snacking

Snacking on junk food after school can be harmful to teeth and overall health. Teach kids that foods can be yummy *and* healthy by stocking pre-cut fruits, vegetables, cheese and pre-made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in their lunch boxes as well as in the fridge. Also, stick with nutritional and smile-friendly drinks like pure milk, water and fruit juice instead of plaque and cavity-inducing drinks like sugary sodas and other artificially-flavored drinks.

Back-to-school time should be fun for everyone. With a little planning, keeping your family healthy and smiling will be a breeze.