



Raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level



Indian Health Service/California Area Office Patient Newsletter

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Director's Message

Sun Protection

Summer is upon us! It's great to spend time outdoors when the sun is shining and the weather is warm. However, the sun is also a source of intense ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can be harmful. When we spend time outdoors, we need to remember to take steps to protect ourselves and our families.

The sun's rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. People who get a lot of exposure to UV rays have a greater risk for skin cancer. UV rays can also cause eye damage. Studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts and macular degeneration, leading causes of vision loss among older adults, and can damage the eye's cornea.

UV rays are their most intense in the late spring and summer months in North America, and are stronger at higher altitudes. Clouds can partially block UV rays, but can also reflect and increase them. Avoid being out in the sun as much as possible from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m, when the sun is at its brightest. Also, remember that the sun's rays can bounce off sand, concrete, and water, so protect yourself even if you're in the shade.

What's the best way to protect yourself from UV radiation?

- **Sunglasses** are the best way to protect your eyes and the skin around them from UV rays. Labels that say "meets ANSI UV Requirements" mean the glasses block at least 99% of UV rays, while those labeled "cosmetic" block only 70% of UV rays. Darker glasses are not necessarily better, because the protection comes from a chemical in or on the glasses. Wrap-around sunglasses work best because they block UV rays from the side.
- **A hat** that has a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck is the best. Avoid straw hats with holes that let sunlight through. If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck. A dark, non-reflective underside to the brim can also help lower the amount of UV rays reaching your face from reflective surfaces such as water. A shade cap (which looks like a baseball cap with fabric draping down the sides and back) can provide more protection for the neck.

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Ouch! Is it a Kidney Stone? By Amy Patterson, PhD

Kidney stones are one of the most common health problems in the United States. Nearly 1 in 11 people will have kidney stones at some point in their lives. Researchers believe that diet, lifestyle, and rising rates of obesity have contributed to the higher incidence of kidney stones.

Kidney stones occur when substances found in your urine crystallize and stick together. Some stones are so small that they are able to pass through the urinary tract without causing any symptoms at all. However, larger stones can get stuck anywhere from the kidneys to the bladder.

What are the symptoms of kidney stones?

The classic symptom of kidney stones is severe pain in your lower back or side. It can be constant or come and go in waves. This pain is usually accompanied by one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain or burning when you urinate
- Blood in your urine (it will appear pink, red, or brown)
- Needing to urinate frequently or more than usual
- Urinating only small amounts at a time
- Urine that smells bad or looks cloudy
- Fever and chills
- Nausea and/or vomiting

What are the risk factors for kidney stones?

Anyone can develop kidney stones, but people with family members who have had kidney stones are more likely to develop them. Men are also somewhat more likely to develop them than women. Here are other risk factors:

- Dehydration. Water helps prevent the crystallization of substances in your urine.
- A diet high in protein and/or sodium.
- Obesity. High body mass index (BMI), large waist size,

and recent weight gain have been linked to an increased risk of kidney stones.

- Bowel problems. Gastric bypass surgery, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or chronic diarrhea can affect your body's ability to absorb calcium and water, increasing the levels of stone-forming substances in your urine.

Additionally, if you've already had kidney stones, you're at increased risk of developing them again.

How do I prevent kidney stones?

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid caffeinated drinks as they can contribute to dehydration.
- Pay attention to your urine. If it is light colored and clear, you are probably getting enough fluids. If it is dark and/or cloudy, you are probably not, but you should consult with your doctor to rule out other causes.
- Adopt a diet that is low in salt and animal protein. Don't add extra salt to your food and choose plant-based sources of protein such as beans and lentils over animal proteins such as eggs and red meat.
- Get enough calcium! Because many stones contain calcium, doctors used to tell people with kidney stones that they needed to avoid calcium, but now we know the opposite is true. In fact, diets low in calcium can increase the likelihood of kidney stone formation in some people. Calcium binds to oxalates in foods, preventing them from turning into stones in the kidneys.

For more information, visit:

- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases: <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/>
- Medline Plus: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/kidneystones.html>

California Governor Signs New Immunization Legislation

By Susan Ducore, BSN, MSN, RN, PHN

On June 30, California Governor Edmund (Jerry) Brown signed a bill into law (SB 277) requiring all California children without a medical exemption to be fully vaccinated in order to attend public or private school, eliminating personal and religious belief exemptions. Governor Brown's signing statement included the following:

"The science is clear that vaccines dramatically protect children against a number of infectious and dangerous diseases. While it's true that no medical intervention is without risk, the evidence shows that immunization powerfully benefits and protects the community."

The legislation is scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2016, thereby allowing time to ensure appropriate notification and implementation. Only two other states allow for *only* medical exemptions.

It is important that both children and adults be vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases that impact the health of individuals as well as that of overall communities.

If you would like additional information about immunizations and the protection offered, please talk with a physician, nurse, or pharmacist employed by your tribal healthcare organization.

Additional information about this new law and other immunization resources can be found at:

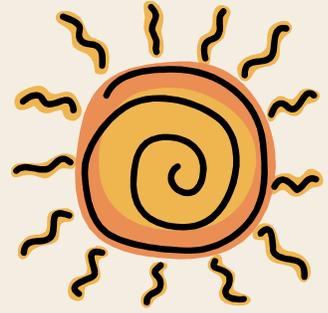
- California Immunization Coalition: <http://www.immunizeca.org/>
- Immunization Action Coalition: www.immunize.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccine Website for Parents: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/
- CDC Vaccine Safety: www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/

Sun Protection cont'd.

- **Long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts** provide protection against UV rays, especially if they're made from tightly woven fabric. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one, and lighter colors have less protection than darker ones. A typical T-shirt has an SPF rating lower than 15, so don't rely on it for sun protection. If you can see light through a fabric, UV rays can get through, too.
- **Sunscreen** has chemicals that interact with the skin to absorb, reflect, or scatter sunlight. You should put on sunscreen at least 15 minutes before you go outside, even on cloudy or cool days. Use at least 1 ounce, and don't forget to use it on all exposed skin, including your scalp if you have thin hair and are not wearing a hat. Reapply it if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off. Always check the expiration date on sunscreen to be sure it's still effective. Most sunscreen products are good for at least 2 to 3 years.

Sunscreens have a sun protection factor (SPF) number that reflects their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. 1 hour in the sun wearing SPF 30 sunscreen is the same as spending 2 minutes in the sun totally unprotected. However, people often do not apply enough sunscreen, so they don't always get the maximum protection. You should use a broad spectrum sunscreen (which protects against UVA and UVB rays) with an SPF of at least 15; if your skin burns easily, use SPF 30 or higher. Sunscreen is labeled "broad spectrum" if it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Some of the chemicals in sunscreens that help protect against UVA rays include avobenzone, zinc oxide, and titanium dioxide. Not all sunscreens have the same ingredients, so if one type bothers your skin, try a different

one. However, no sunscreen protects you completely from UV rays. Even with proper sunscreen use, some UV rays get through, which is why using other forms of sun protection is also important.



Some People Need Extra Protection

Infants under the age of 6 months cannot wear sunscreen and should be protected from the sun using hats and protective clothing, and kept out of direct sunlight. Children over the age of 6 months tend to spend more time outdoors than adults and can burn more easily. They should have sunscreen on whenever they will be exposed to a lot of sunlight, and should wear sunglasses and hats to protect their eyes and face. Kids will often complain about having to wear hats, sunglasses, or sunscreen, but it is very important to protect their skin and eyes from UV damage from an early age.

Individuals with the following characteristics need to take special care in the sun:

- Family or personal history of skin cancer, especially melanoma
- Irregular or large moles
- Freckles and/or burn easily
- Fair skin, hair, or eyes
- Lupus or any medical condition that weakens the immune system
- Has had an organ transplant
- Using medicines to lower or suppress the immune system, or that make skin more sensitive to sunlight
- Live or work at a higher altitude

How to Care for Your Baby's First Teeth By Steve Riggio, DDS

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend that you take your child to the dentist within six months after the first tooth erupts, or by the first birthday, whichever comes first. The first tooth usually erupts sometime between 4-7 months of age. The teething can last up to three years for the 20 primary teeth (baby teeth) to erupt. Teething can cause problems such as fussiness, difficulty falling asleep, and refusal to eat. As a parent, you can try rubbing the gums with a clean finger or moist gauze, or letting your child chew on a clean teething ring. The use of numbing gels is not advised unless recommended by your healthcare provider or dentist.

Be sure to take your baby to the dentist once the first tooth erupts. Your dentist can show you the proper way to brush your child's teeth and care for that brand new smile. The

dentist can also apply fluoride varnish to the tooth. Fluoride varnish enters the tooth enamel and makes it hard. It prevents new cavities and can slow or stop decay from getting worse. It is safe. It can be used after the first tooth erupts. The varnish is painted on the tooth and only a very small amount is used. It can be applied every 3-6 months depending upon the risk of cavities. The best indicator of risk is a history of cavities in mom. If you have had cavities, be sure to let your dentist know. At every well-baby visit, your baby's primary care provider should also take a look at your baby's teeth and apply fluoride varnish or refer your baby to a dentist to apply the varnish.



The Importance of Sleep

By Christine Brennan, MPH

In 2013, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared insufficient sleep as a public health epidemic. More than a quarter of the U.S. population reports not getting enough sleep and around 10% report chronic insomnia. Insufficient sleep can be due to sleep disorders, such as insomnia, narcolepsy, restless leg syndrome, or sleep apnea. It is also caused by lifestyle choices (giving up sleep to accomplish more tasks during the day).

Research has shown that constant lack of sleep has been linked to several chronic diseases and increased risk of injury:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 100,000 of the police-reported automobile crashes in the U.S. each year are caused by driver fatigue. These crashes amount to around 1,550 deaths and over 71,000 injuries.
- Insufficient sleep has been linked to the following chronic diseases:
 - Diabetes: insufficient sleep is linked to an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes and increased hemoglobin A1c levels in those with Type 2 diabetes
 - Obesity: lack of sleep can interfere with appetite regulation and metabolism, increasing the risk of obesity
 - Depression: decreased sleep has been linked to symptoms of depression, especially in people with untreated sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea
 - Cardiovascular Disease: lack of sleep has been shown to increase risks of high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, stroke, and heart disease. This has especially been found in patients suffering from untreated sleep apnea

The CDC recommends the following amount of sleep for each group (some people may need more or less than this):

- Newborns: 16-18 hours a day
- Preschool-Aged Children: 11-12 hours a day
- School-Aged Children: At least 10 hours a day
- Teenagers: 9-10 hours a day
- Adults: 7-8 hours a day

To improve sleeping habits, the National Sleep Foundation recommends the following tips to allow for more sleep and a better night's sleep:

- Go to bed at the same time every night and get up at the same time each morning
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and a proper temperature
- Remove all electronics (TV, computers, stereos) from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals close to bedtime

If you are still having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep after making these changes, the CDC recommends keeping a sleep diary to take to your physician so they can determine if you have a sleep disorder. The sleep diary should include the times you go to bed, fall asleep, wake up, get out of bed, take naps, exercise, consume alcohol, and consume caffeinated drinks.



For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/>

Healthy Eating to Improve Quality of Life

By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE



Quality of life includes the ability to enjoy all that life has to offer and to pursue a life full of meaning and purpose. Quality of life involves joy, fulfillment, and both physical and emotional wellbeing. Good nutrition and healthy eating habits

support quality of life.

Often, when working to improve quality of life, a common side effect is weight gain. Good nutrition and healthy eating habits can slip when taking care of others, struggling to make ends meet, working to advance a career, kicking an addiction, and dealing with emotional issues. This is understandable since food and comfort go hand-in-hand. Some even believe transferring bad habits or addictions to comfort foods is a good trade-off. This type of transference is about using food to cope or deal with physiological and emotional cravings or urges in order to prevent relapse. Those sugary, fatty, and

refined junk foods seem harmless, maybe even well-earned rewards. In reality, poor nutrition and bad eating habits can lead to chronic disease, emotional problems, and negatively impact self-image.

Good nutrition and healthy eating habits are not the only components that support the quality of life, but they are important. Recognize this and learn by working with those who are knowledgeable, well-informed, and experienced in creating balanced and healthful meals, such as a registered dietitian and/or nutritionist. You have the ability to make choices, to decide what you want, and to shape your quality of life. Wherever you may be on your quality of life plan, include good nutrition and healthy eating.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nutrition.gov/>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/foundation-health-measures/Health-Related-Quality-of-Life-and-Well-Being>