

# Wellness News

Tips to stay healthy throughout the year  
Issue VIII ■ August 2020



## Hit me with your best shot!

### What is a vaccine?

Vaccines leverage our immune system's natural ability to defend our bodies from germs. Vaccines are made from very small amounts of weak or dead germs that can cause disease/illness but for good reason! Vaccines prepare the immune system to fight the disease faster and more effectively. In turn, creating a "memory file" that remains for when you are exposed to the active/live germs.

### Community Immunity

When we get vaccinated, we protect not just ourselves, we protect the community! Experts in public health, think of infections as a chain reaction that can spread rapidly with more contagious diseases. When we vaccinate, we help slow the spread or even break the chain of disease in our communities.

### Who needs vaccinations?

While we commonly think of vaccinations for children, adults need vaccinations too. Flu, pneumonia and shingles are typically the first that come to mind, but did you know there are more than ten other vaccinations you may need during your adult life, even more if you are traveling outside the country. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a [vaccination assessment tool](#) to help you determine the vaccines you need..

## Back to School Basics

As we prepare for back to school, many students will not have a traditional start to their school year. Many school systems in response to COVID 19 and the safety of their staff and students, will be implementing hybrid learning models, to include virtual learning. This can create stress for students and parents. Here are some tips to help navigate these unprecedented times.

### Virtual learning and your family

- **Set a routine** – as you learn your school districts plans and how days will be structured, create a routine to help both you and your children adjust to the new schedule.
- **Make sleep a priority** – getting the proper amount of sleep helps improve how we handle stress in our daily lives.
- **Fit in Fitness** – something as simple as a quick walk around the block or dance break to improve focus and cognitive function.
- **Mindfulness Matters** – Incorporating mindfulness practices, even as little as 5-10 minutes per day, can help ease the stress of the new routine. Create a calming space for your children to use when they are feeling overwhelmed, you might find it useful for you too!
- **Reduce screen time** – While we know it will be hard with virtual learning to reduce screen time, find ways to incorporate outdoor play, board games, and other creative play without

technology as frequently as you can.

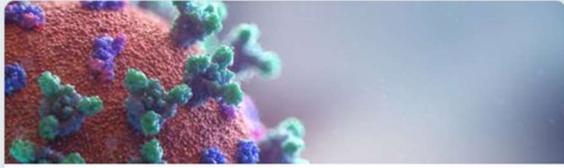
- **Check in and Speak Up** – These are stressful times for our children, but how they express their feelings may not always be clear. Check in to ask how they are feeling and where they are struggling. Observe their behavior for changes in mood or energy level. Then reach out to the teachers and school support staff to learn about resources to help you and your student stay emotionally healthy!
- **Nutrition is Key** – A healthy diet is important to maintaining overall good health. Many common children's snacks and beverages are high in sugar, instead substitute water and whole foods such as fruits and vegetables. Check out [eatright.org](http://eatright.org) for more tips on healthy eating for children.

## CareFirst Resources

### COVID 19 Resources

In response to COVID-19, CareFirst has several resources devoted to getting you and your employees the information you need.

- CareFirst.com has the resources needed to help guide you this unprecedented time, from employer updates to member level updates on coverage to prevention and safety.
- The CareFirst Wellness platform powered by Sharecare, has an entire section under the "Discover" tab devoted to providing members the information they need to stay informed and stay well. Find testing centers, current data, stress management tools, and at home workouts. Login to [sharecare/carefirst.com](http://sharecare/carefirst.com) to learn more.



**COVID-19 Care Center**  
Get the latest details about the COVID-19 pandemic

### Vaccination Information

Looking for more information specific to adult or pediatric vaccinations? Login to your CareFirst wellness platform to find information or follow these topics. Go to the "Discover" tab and click on "health topics" to get up to date information in your timeline pertaining to vaccination information.



**Health Topics**  
Follow topics you're interested in

## National Resources

Looking for more information on age appropriate vaccinations or back to school tips, check out the following websites.

- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Vaccinations](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccination/)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Back to School Health](https://www.cdc.gov/backtoschool/)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](https://www.hhs.gov/)
- [MedlinePlus](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)
- [National Institutes of Health](https://www.nih.gov/)