

Don't Get Stressed Over Tests

Get Fit



Test time can be stress time, but experts say exercise is a good way to fight back.

It's also a good way to boost overall health.

"Running or fast walking is such a valuable way to deal with stress," says Kathy Styron, physical education instructor and Healthy School Team leader at Aloma Elementary School. And, she says, "I find most of my students enjoy running or walking."

In fact, some 700 elementary school students from seven schools within the Winter Park Consortium of Schools signed up for the inaugural Fast Start Track and Field Invitational at Showalter Field on January 28. (See adjacent story for more details.)

Experts say one of the best things about exercise is that it makes a person feel good. This is because exercise causes the brain to release endorphins which can make a person feel happier.

Other benefits associated with exercise like running and walking are that they help build stronger muscles and bones, produce a leaner body, decrease the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and they can set the groundwork for a life of fitness, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

How much exercise is enough? Much more than most children get in a day.

According to Action for Healthy Kids, a non-profit organization focused on finding ways to deal with the growing number of obese and sedentary children in the United States, there are nine million overweight American children and fewer than 25 percent get at least 30 minutes daily of any type of physical activity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services recommend all children age 2 and older get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise most days of the week.

By comparison, the American Academy of Pediatrics estimates the average child watches about three hours of television each day.

Parents can do a lot to help their children get moving. Here are some suggestions offered by the Nemours Foundation on their website www.kidshealth.com:

- Help children participate in a variety of age-appropriate activities
- Set up a schedule for regular exercise
- Get the family involved, taking walks or playing active games
- Parents should adopt a healthier lifestyle and become positive role models
- Keep things fun

Winter Park Consortium Kids Ready to Race

Some 700 elementary age children from schools within the Winter Park Consortium of Schools got revved up and ready to participate in the first annual Fast Start Track and Field Invitational.

The event—the brainstorm of marathoner and Dommerich Elementary School parent Scott Millson—was scheduled for 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday January 28 at Showalter Field.

Planning the event has been a labor of love for Millson who remembers participating in a similar running event in Jacksonville every year while growing up. "I couldn't wait for practices to start," he said. And he couldn't wait to get his commemorative T-shirt.

He said the event and an inspiring physical education teacher are at the root of his love of running that continues today.

Hoping to share that love, Millson decided to put together a first annual track and field event for local elementary age children.

Millson met with Jana Ricci, Healthy School Teams coordinator, and began promoting the event through Healthy School Team Leaders at each of the elementary schools in the consortium. About 700 children from

seven W.P. Consortium schools signed up to participate. These schools included Aloma, Audubon Park, Brookshire, Dommerich, Killarney, Lake Sybella and Lakemont elementaries. The events scheduled for the competition mirror standard track and field events including events from a 100-meter dash up through an 800-meter run, as well as other relay and field events.

It is all designed to foster better health and fitness for elementary-age students through friendly competition, and to encourage them to exercise throughout the year, explained Millson.

www.healthykidstoday.org

Looking for more news you can use to keep your kids healthy and help them become better students? Visit www.healthykidstoday.org, a website created by the Winter Park Health Foundation.

The site is updated weekly with news, tips and recipes. It features timely stories on topics like nutrition, the importance of physical activity and how to help kids cope with life issues. It also includes information on the Healthy School Teams, School Nurses and CHILL Counselors in your child's school.

The Winter Park Health Foundation believes "Healthy Kids Make Better Students" and provides financial support for the Coordinated Youth Initiative and its health and wellness services including the CHILL counseling program, School Nurses, Nurse Practitioners/Student Health Centers at Glenridge Middle & Winter Park High schools and Healthy School Teams. For more information on the foundation, go to www.wphf.org.

Healthy Recipes

Strawberry Yogurt Breakfast Split

- 1 banana
- 4 oz. (1 C.) fresh strawberries
- 4 oz. (1/2 C.) vanilla yogurt
- 1 T. chopped, toasted almonds

1. Peel and split banana.
2. Place banana halves in serving bowl.
3. Top with strawberries, yogurt and almonds.

Yield: 1 serving

Nutritional Analysis per serving:
Calories, 312; Fat, 7 grams;
Cholesterol, 5 milligrams; Fiber, 5 grams; Sodium, 75 milligrams; Calories from fat, 19 percent.

For more healthy recipes, check out www.healthykidstoday.org. New recipes are posted weekly.

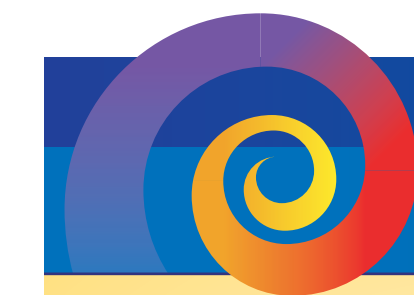
Creamy Tomato Dip

- Dip:
- 1 C. low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 C. prepared salsa
- 2 T. chopped fresh cilantro, plus more for garnish
- 2 T. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 C. finely chopped red, yellow, green bell pepper (any combination)
- 1 red bell pepper

1. Place cottage cheese in food processor or blender. Blend until smooth. Add salsa and pulse until combined. Remove mixture to bowl and stir in cilantro, cheese and peppers. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
2. To serve, lay red pepper on its side and cut off top third. Remove seeds and fill pepper with dip. Sprinkle with chopped cilantro. Place in center of platter and surround with vegetables.

Yield: 8 servings

Per Serving: Calories, 72; Fiber, 4 grams; Fat, 1 gram; Cholesterol, 2 milligrams; Sodium, 197 milligrams



Healthy Kids Today

Elementary School Edition

January 2006

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Healthy Kids Today is published by the Winter Park Health Foundation especially for students and families affiliated with schools in the Winter Park Consortium of Schools—Aloma, Audubon Park, Brookshire, Cheney, Dommerich, Hungerford, Killarney, Lake Sybella and Lakemont elementary schools; Glenridge and Maitland Middle schools; Winter Park 9th Grade Center; Winter Park High School and Winter Park Tech.



Curbing the Common Cold

It can start with a scratchy throat or a series of unexpected sneezes. These early signs of a common cold can mean the beginning of a miserable one- to two-week illness.

This time of year the cold—responsible for 22 million lost school days a year—is quite common. It is important for parents and kids to know the best way to avoid one, and the best way to treat symptoms if they can't.

It may be all the more essential to try to avoid colds right now. Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests

(FCAT) are just around the corner, and healthy kids are more likely to perform better than sick ones.

It is important for parents to know the differences between treating a cold and treating bacterial infections, according to Michelle Cash, MSN,

ARNP, CPNP, nurse practitioner at the Student Health Center at Glenridge Middle School.

With colds, which are caused by viruses, parents will be treating the symptoms, Mrs. Cash said. For example, parents could get a

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Hand Washing How-tos

Your mom always told you it was important to wash your hands, and she was right.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is the most important thing you can do to avoid illness because it kills

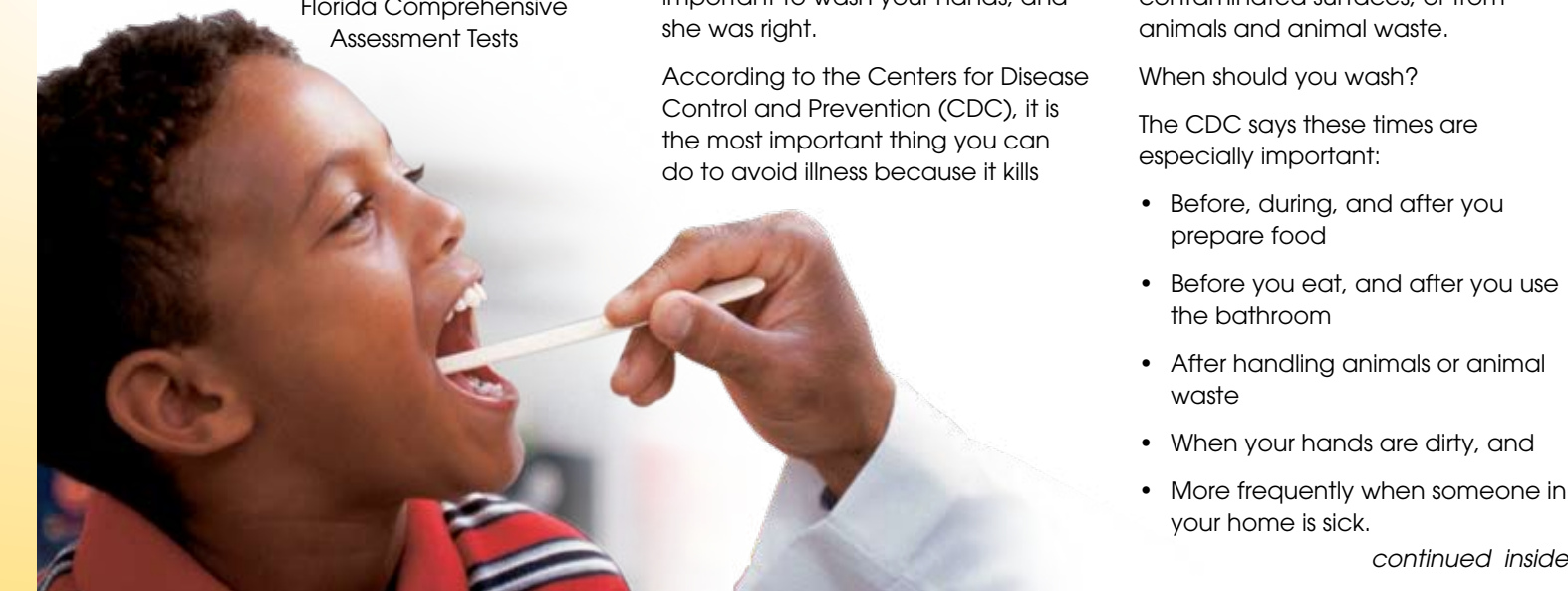
germs picked up from other people, contaminated surfaces, or from animals and animal waste.

When should you wash?

The CDC says these times are especially important:

- Before, during, and after you prepare food
- Before you eat, and after you use the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When your hands are dirty, and
- More frequently when someone in your home is sick.

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non-prescription decongestant for a child's stuffy nose or an antihistamine for a runny nose and watery eyes. These are available without a prescription.

Antibiotics are NOT going to help a cold unless it develops into an infection such as in the ear or sinuses, she said. And because Central Florida is an area where germs have become highly resistant to antibiotics, it is a good idea to use antibiotics only when necessary, she added.

In addition to treating symptoms of a cold, Mrs. Cash said it is important for parents and children with colds to get a lot of rest and drink a lot of fluids.

HAND WASHING from page 1

What is the best way to wash your hands?

Here is advice from the CDC:

- First wet your hands and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Place the bar soap on a rack and allow it to drain.
- Next rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces, including under the fingernails.
- Continue for 10 - 15 seconds or about the length of a little tune. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.
- Rinse well and dry your hands. The more often you wash, the better.

Perfectionism

Too Much of a Good Thing

The bright red "B" on the student's paper just had to be a mistake. The local high school student only got "A"s. She only knew how to get "A"s. In fact, she was only allowed by her parents to get "A"s, or at least that was what she thought. So she sought out her teacher and told her she knew there had been a mistake. It came as a shock when the teacher assured her the paper merited a "B," nothing more, nothing less, but still a fine grade. To the student, however, that didn't matter.

To perfectionist students, anything less than a top notch grade or performance is not acceptable. And when they fail to live up to often unrealistic expectations of success, they can feel like failures, and batter themselves mentally and emotionally. This need for perfection is something teachers and counselors see in all age and income groups, according to Joanna Eckhardt, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Coordinator of the CHILL program. (CHILL--Community Help & Intervention in Life's Lessons--counselors provide free counseling for students of all ages in the public schools serving Winter Park and neighboring communities who need help with issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, grief and loss, low self-esteem, anger management and depression. CHILL counselors help families, as well as students, to promote healing throughout the family system.) Perfectionism is present throughout the year, but it can intensify during stressful times, such as the approach of major tests like the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). In some cases, the drive for perfection seems to be inborn, in others, it may be the result of parents placing high demands on children. In still other cases, Experts say there is nothing wrong with students wanting to do well, but the danger of perfectionism is that "it disrupts children's natural curiosity to learn and robs them of the joy they



used to feel in the presence of a new discovery, inquiry or intervention," says Joan Franklin Smutny in her article "Preventing Perfectionism in Children" in the National PTA magazine called "Our Children."

She says perfectionist children tend to avoid trying new things for fear of failure and they procrastinate and leave work unfinished out of fear it won't be good enough. They often focus on mistakes rather than on what they did well, set unrealistic goals and condemn themselves when they don't achieve them. They also have trouble accepting criticism, find it hard to laugh at themselves and focus on end products rather than on the process of learning.

Perfectionists don't often seek help, because they don't like to admit that they have problems, according to Mrs. Eckhardt.

And parents often are not tuned in unless the behavior is pointed out to them.

But parents can be on the lookout for signs that things are getting out of control.

Parents may want to start asking questions if they see their children wanting to avoid school and having headaches or trouble sleeping or if they are obsessively studying, according to CHILL counselors.

CHILL counselors offered a variety of suggestions for parents who want to help their children cope with perfectionism.

It is helpful for parents to model positive behavior when it comes to handling their own mistakes, said Heather Galvin, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and CHILL counselor for Maitland Middle School. It is important not to overact. And it is a good idea not to repeatedly bring up mistakes, whether they are your own or your spouse's because children model the behavior they see at home.

And when it comes to grades, it is helpful if parents can focus on what was learned from an assignment and whether the student was prepared, rather than just focusing on the grade, said Michelle Johnson, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and CHILL counselor at Audubon Park Elementary School.

Other suggestions:

- Praise children for non-competitive things, such as helping others or being part of a team
- Encourage positive self talk when children get down on themselves. They can repeat to themselves

things like "everyone makes mistakes," "no one is perfect," or "I did my best"

- Make sure children know they are valued as people and not just for what they do

- Help kids understand mistakes are a normal part of learning

- Help children plan for challenges and applaud them when they take risks

- Encourage children to read about the lives of great achievers who faced challenges and had failures along the way

- Celebrate a sense of humor

Instead of pressing for perfection, it is a good idea for parents to teach their children to do their personal best, said Ms. Johnson.

For help on this and other mental health issues, contact the CHILL counselor at your school. For more information on the CHILL program, founded and supported through the Winter Park Health Foundation, go to www.healthykidstoday.org.

FCAT Testing Tips

In addition to making sure their children get enough sleep and exercise, parents can do many things to help them get ready for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Here are a few tips--based on the latest in brain research--designed to set the stage for a successful test-taking experience (suggested by Jenny Stokes, counselor at Glenridge Middle School and Jana Ricci, Healthy School Teams coordinator for the Winter Park Consortium of Schools).

- Eat healthfully. The brain, like the body, needs good nutrition for peak performance. Foods that are especially good for the brain include water, cottage cheese, fresh fruit, eggs, fish, oatmeal, chicken, turkey, leafy green vegetables, bananas, apples, complex carbohydrates such as oatmeal and brown rice, and proteins.

- It is especially important to eat breakfast. But stay clear of simple carbohydrates such as sugar,

sodas, cookies, candy, breads and sugared cereal. These carbohydrates make the test taker sleepy. Good options include fruit, oatmeal, toast, eggs and yogurt. Think protein. Local schools are promoting smoothies as good breakfast and snack alternatives.

- Think positive thoughts, they create good brain chemistry. When you are stressed, angry and frustrated, your body produces a chemical called cortisol, which blocks thinking. Successful test taking requires happy, positive thinking. It is important for the student to be his or her own cheerleader.

- Listen to classical music. Classical music organizes the brain for focus, clarity, creativity, emotional well-being and the ability to learn and recall.

- Tune up the brain with exercises such as rubbing the eye points in the back of your head when you feel sleepy. These points can be found on the same level as the top of your ears on the back of your head.

- Stimulate the brain with peppermints, lemon and cinnamon.

- Yellow is a good color for waking the brain. Students may want to wear yellow the day of the test.

- If a student is trying to recall something, suggest he or she look up and to the left. According to brain research, this action helps the brain access the moment it learned the information and this helps with recall.

If you'd like more ideas and want to learn more about learning, nutrition and the brain go to www.healthykidstoday.org and click on the Health Wise/Brain Smart button.

Deep Breathing Eases Test Stress

School nurses become very popular at FCAT time. Students come in with stomachaches and headaches that often are signs of testing jitters. And too much anxiety can have a negative impact on student performance.

Deep breathing can be an effective antidote.

Here is one exercise, Balloon Breathing, suggested by CHILL counselor Aimee Jennings, Licensed Mental Health Counselor at Brookshire Elementary School.

1. Find a quiet place and close your eyes.
2. Place your hands over your ribs.
3. Think of your belly as a balloon.
4. Take a DEEP BREATH slowly through your nose until the balloon feels full.
5. Hold it. Count slowly to five--1-2-3-4-5.
6. Then breathe out slowly through your mouth.
7. Repeat several times. Each time you will become more and more relaxed.

You can also have your child add a positive word or phrase as he or she exhales, such as "relax," "I can do it," or "I am ready."