

YOUR QUARTERLY
BRAIN FOOD

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Halloween safety checklist
- Student tobacco use
- Healthy snacks for lunch boxes
- September—November Health Events Calendars

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COG Health Quarterly

The Back to School Special

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Back to School Health Checklist

It's time to go back to school, and that means keeping you, your children, and your family healthy. This issue of the COG Health Quarterly will focus on ways to keep you and your family in good health for the new school year. We will look at stress management, tobacco use, healthy snacks to fuel yours and your child's day, getting adequate sleep, bullying, cyber bullying, and gangs.

But first, take a look at these important health items to prepare you and your child for going back to school:

Immunizations: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children entering

public school have their immunizations up to date; parents generally must provide up-to-date records of immunizations. For information on vaccination requirements for MD click [here](#), for VA click [here](#), for DC click [here](#).

Hearing and Vision Tests: some states recommend but do not require hearing and vision tests. Whether required or not, they may be a good idea for any child whose parent has concerns about these areas. Impaired hearing and vision can adversely affect learning, and often young children don't know that they can't see or hear properly. Some school districts also require basic health exams

before school entry.

Ease Back into Sleep: for most parents and kids, going back to school means earlier bedtimes and earlier mornings; this is not an easy transition.

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Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Gangs

Bullying, cyberbullying, and gangs are real and serious issues parents may have to deal with at some point in their children's lives. With the growing trend of bullying and aggression geared at youth, it's important for parents to become aware of the issues, to know what warning signs to look for, and to know what preventive measures and actions to take to ensure your

child is not involved in or is a victim of dangerous activities or aggressive behaviors. Read on for more information about bullying, cyber bullying, and gangs.

Bullying and Cyberbullying
What is Bullying and Cyberbullying? Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or per-

ceived power imbalance. The behavior is aggressive, and repeated over time. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, tablets, and social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Kids who are cyberbullied are often bullied as well.

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Backpack Strategies for Parents and Students

Carrying too much weight in backpacks, bags, and purses, and wearing it the wrong way can lead to back pain and strain. Additionally, it can cause weakened muscles and stooped posture. Take these steps to avoid health problems for you and your child:

- A back should weigh no more than 10% of total body weight
- Load heaviest items closest to the back of the backpack
- Arrange books and materials so they don't slide around in the bag
- Check contents of bags to remove items that aren't necessary
- If the bag is regularly too heavy, consider using a bag with wheels
- When using a backpack, distribute weight evenly by using both straps; wearing a bag slung on one side can cause leaning to the side and curving of the spine. When using a purse, rotate the shoulder on which the bag is normally carried to balance weight from side to side
- Select a bag with well padded shoulder straps
- When wearing a backpack, wear the waist belt if the bag has one



*“Nearly 90%
of adult
smokers begin
smoking by
age 18 years”*

Tobacco Use Among Students

Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the US. It is the primary cause of at least 30% of all cancer deaths, and nearly 80% of pulmonary disease and cardiovascular death and disease. A recent [CDC report](#) indicates that nearly 443,000 deaths occur annually because of cigarette smoking and exposure to second hand smoke. Moreover, nearly 90% of adult smokers begin smoking by age 18 years. To assess current tobacco use among youths, CDC analyzed data from the 2011 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS). The report demon-

strated that current use of tobacco among middle school students was 7.1%, and high school students was 23.2%. Cigarette use in middle school students was 4.3%, and high school students was 15.8%. A recent report indicated that cigarette use decreased by 32.8% from 2000-2011, however **non-cigarette use increased** from 3.4% in 2000 to 10.4% in 2011. Non-cigarette products include chewing tobacco, and cigars. Cigars are generally taxed at a lower rate than cigarettes, and are not subject to FDA regulations. Giving children information about the risks of tobacco use,

and establishing clear rules and your reasons for them, can help protect them from starting the habit.

Tobacco is very addictive because of the chemical **nicotine** present in tobacco leaves. Nicotine affects mood, appetite, the heart, lungs, and stomach. Additionally packaged tobacco contains up to 28 different cancer causing chemicals.

Kids might be drawn to smoking and chewing tobacco for many reasons, however parents should communicate with their children how

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Tobacco Use Among Students cont'd

damaging tobacco products can be.

A few good prevention tips to keep your children from using tobacco include:

- Discuss tobacco use frequently, and without your child feeling they are being punished or judged.
- Encourage kids to become involved in activities that prohibit smoking, such as sports.
- Discuss ways in which they can respond to peer pressure.
- Help build your child's self confidence, as this will help them to say no when offered tobacco.
- Establish firm rules that prohibit tobacco products in your household.

Signs that your child is using tobacco include:

- **Coughing**
- **Throat irritation**
- **Hoarseness**
- **Bad breath and smell on clothing and belongings**
- **Decreased athletic performance**
- **Greater susceptibility to coughs**

Children may become addicted to nicotine in a short amount of time. To help your child stop using tobacco, the following could be helpful:

- Make a list of reasons your child wants to quit using tobacco
- Set a quit date

- Encourage them to hang out with friends who don't smoke
- Work with them to practice saying "no"
- Be prepared for cravings; offer sugarless gum, and carrot sticks to keep their mouths busy
- Contact a tobacco cessation specialist for tools and support your child needs to quit
- Join a support group
- Learn from mistakes and be supportive

If you are a smoker, your child might be quick to observe any contradiction between what parents say and

do. If you are a smoker, admit that you made a mistake by starting smoking, and that if you could do it again, you would have never started. Secondly, quit. It's not easy to quit, and will take several attempts but your children will be encouraged as they see you overcome your addiction.

Sources: www.cdc.gov; www.kidshealth.org

To take the first steps to quit smoking, visit:
www.smokefree.gov/

To help your teen quit smoking, visit:
www.teen.smokefree.gov/

September 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30						1 -Childhood cancer awareness month -National childhood obesity awareness month -National cholesterol education month
2	3 Labor Day	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 National Celiac Disease Awareness Day	14	15
16	17	18	19 National School Backpack Awareness Day	20	21 World Alzheimer's Day	22 First day of Fall
23	24	25 COG Gang Conference	26 National Women's Health and Fitness Day Gang Conference	27 COG Gang Conference	28 COG Gang Conference	29 World Heart Day

Calendar of Events

Sep 1—30 Childhood Cancer Awareness Month: one in five children continues to die from cancer. Learn more at www.curesearch.org

Sep 1—30 National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month: more than 23 million children and teens in the US are obese or overweight. Learn more at www.healthierkidsbrighterfutures.org

Sep 1—30 National Cholesterol Education Month: blood cholesterol level is an indicator for your chances of getting heart disease. Learn more at www.hp2010.nhlbihin.net/cholmonth/

Sep 13 National Celiac Disease Awareness Month: celiac disease is a common disease that is aggravated by certain foods. Learn more at www.csaceliacs.info

Sep 19 National School Backpack Awareness Day: carrying too much weight in a pack or purse can lead to back pain and strain. Learn more at www.aofa.org

Sep 21 World Alzheimer's Day: Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. Learn more at www.alz.org

Sep 26 National Women's Health and Fitness Day: focused attention regular physical activity and health awareness for women. Learn more at www.fitnessday.com/women/index.htm

Sep 25-28 COG Gang Conference. www.mwcog.org

Sep 29 World Heart Day: heart disease and stroke are the claim 17.3 million lives each year. Learn more at www.world-heart-federation.org/what-we-do/awareness/world-heart-day/about-world-heart-day/

Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Gangs cont'd



“Parents have a role to play in preventing bullying by talking about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely”

Additionally, kids who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the bullying.

Generally, the bully has physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity. There are different types of bullying, including physical (hitting, pushing, breaking belongings), verbal (saying or writing mean things, name-calling), and social bullying (hurting someone’s reputation, spreading rumors). Cyberbullying falls into its own category of bullying, since it is more discrete, can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can reach a child when he or she is alone.

In the US, [data](#) indicates that 20% of students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying, and that [28%](#) of students in grades 6–12 experienced bullying.

What are risk factors for being a bully and being bullied? No single factor puts a child at risk of being bullied or bullying others. However, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight, or being new to a school
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem

- Are less popular than others, or do not get along well with others

However, even if a child has these risk factors, it doesn’t mean that they will be bullied.

Generally, children who bully likely have these factors:

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement or have issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

What are signs a child is being bullied? Look for changes in the child. Some signs that may point to bullying are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, or electronics
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem

- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

If you know someone in serious distress or danger, don’t ignore the problem. [Get help right away.](#)

What are the effects of bullying? Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness. These issues may persist into adulthood.

It is important to talk to kids to determine whether bullying—or something else—is a concern.

How can we prevent bullying? Parents have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can help kids [understand bullying](#) by talking about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Parents should [keep the lines of communication open](#), check in with kids often and listen to them. Parents should know their kids’ friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.

How can we prevent cyberbullying? Be aware of what your kids are doing online, what sites they visit, and their online activities, and establish

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Halloween Safety

During Halloween, follow these tips to ensure your child has a safe and healthy day:

- Make sure you or a trusted adult is with them at all times during trick or treating
- Know the route your kids will be taking if you are not going to be with them. Let them know that they are to check-in with you frequently
- Help your young child pick out or make a costume that will be safe, and doesn't cause them to trip when they walk. If they are wearing a mask of any kind, make sure that the eyeholes are large enough for good peripheral vision. If they are carrying props, make sure they are soft and flexible to avoid injury
- Know what other activities a child may be attending, such as parties, school or mall functions.
- Make sure you set a time that your kids should be home
- Explain to kids of all ages the difference between tricks and vandalism

- Serve your kids a filling meal before trick or treating so they won't be as willing to eat any candy before they bring it home for you to check
- Teach your kids not to get into strangers cars, or to talk to strangers, no matter what the person says to them.



October 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 -Health Literacy Month -Breast Cancer Awareness Mnt -Child Health Day	2 -SIDS Awareness Month -Natl Bullying Prevention month	3 Walk to School Day	4	5	6
7 Mental Illness Awareness Week	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 World Food Day	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Halloween	31			

Calendar of Events

Health Literacy Month: promote understandable health information. Learn more at www.healthliteracymonth.org/hl_month.asp

National Breast Cancer Awareness month: Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in the US. Learn more at www.nbcam.org

National Bullying Prevention Month: Bullying comes in many forms and can have life long affects. Learn more at www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm

Sudden Death Syndrome Awareness Month: Thousands of babies die of SIDS in the US yearly. Learn more at www.firstcandle.org

Oct 1: Child Health Day. Enable a life of health for your child. Learn more at www.mchb.hrsa.gov

Oct 3: Walk to School Day. Communities and schools are using Walk to School Day as the first step to change community culture. Learn more at www.walkbiketoschool.org

Oct 7: Mental Illness Awareness Week. Mental illness affects many, in many different ways. Learn more at www.nami.org

Oct 16: World Food Day. A worldwide event to increase awareness and understanding of world hunger. Learn more at www.worldfooddayusa.org

10 Healthy Snacks for You and Your Child's Lunch Box



For busy parents and students on the go, it's important to have healthy snacks readily available that provide protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats for whenever sugar levels drop and snack cravings hit. Below is a list of 10 healthy snacks you and your kids will enjoy on the go.

- Ants on a Log (celery sticks filled with peanut butter and topped with raisins)
- Apple and orange slices sprinkled with powdered cinnamon
- Melon wedges
- Carrot sticks with hummus dip
- Cheddar cheese cubes
- Medley of blueberries, strawberries, and grapes
- Mini Greek yogurt with side of fruit
- Homemade trail mix: get creative by adding dried cherries, cashews, dried peaches, pecans, pumpkin seeds, pistachios, chocolate chips
- Air popped popcorn with a little salt and olive oil
- Applesauce, add crushed nuts and dried cranberries

Health Check List, cont'd

Start going to bed a little bit earlier each night, and waking up a little earlier each morning, even if only 5—10 minutes. Sleep is critical for mental and physical health, especially for growing children.

Fuel the Body with Proper Foods: a healthy breakfast is important for the start of every day. Keep quick and healthy options available, such as cottage cheese or Greek yogurt and fruit, whole grain bread and peanut butter, oatmeal and hot cereals, and hard boiled eggs. This will help make breakfast go quickly. For lunch, include plenty of fresh fruits and

veggies like carrots sticks, berries, bananas, grapes, and high protein snacks like cheeses or hummus.

Weigh the Backpack: a child's backpack should weigh no more than 10% of his or her body-weight to reduce the risk of back pain and injury. Heavy backpacks can cause back, shoulder and neck pain when packs are too heavy and worn for too many hours throughout the day.

Reduce First Day Anxiety: many kids, especially those entering a new school may feel anxiety leading up to the first day of school.

Parents can help ease this anxiety by talking to kids about what to expect and discussing their anxieties.

Parents should also ensure that kids have emergency phone numbers on file at school, and on their person. The school nurse should also have special health instructions for your child's specific medication and medical conditions (asthma, allergies, etc.)

Source: http://www.education.com/magazine/article/Back_to_School_Health/

**“Many kids
may feel
anxiety
leading up
to the first
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school”**

November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 -American Diabetes Month -Lung Cancer Awareness month	2 National Healthy Skin Month	3
4	5 COG Health WEEK	6 COG Health WEEK	7 COG Health WEEK	8 COG Health WEEK	9 COG Health WEEK	10
11	12	13	14 National Get smart about antibiotics week	15 Great American Smokeout	16	17
18 GERD Awareness Week	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Calendar of Events

American Diabetes Month: nearly 26 million adults and children in the United States have diabetes. Learn more at www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/programs/american-diabetes-month

Lung Cancer Awareness Month: detecting lung cancer early can save your life. Learn more at www.lungcanceralliance.org

National Healthy Skin Month: Current estimates are that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer. Learn more at www.aad.org

Nov 5—9: COG Health Week, events include vision and blood pressure screenings, and Zumba classes

Nov 14—18: National Get Smart About Antibiotics Week. Antibiotics cure bacterial infections, not viral infections like the flu, cold or runny nose. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/getsmart

Nov 15: Great American Smokeout. Take a day off of smoking for your health. Learn more at www.cancer.org

Nov 18—24: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease Awareness Week. Have repeated bouts of heartburn? Learn more at www.aboutgerd.org/site/about-gerd/gerd-awareness-week

10 School Stress Relievers for Students

Most students experience regular stress because of school, however few find the time to try stress relievers to handle the stress. The following list, by [Elizabeth Scott, M.S.](#), is a student appropriate way to minimize the stresses from school:

Get enough sleep: students usually get inadequate sleep which puts them at a disadvantage for being less motivated, and makes learning more difficult. Power naps are a good way to refresh.

Manage time wisely: setting up a schedule is a great way to stay organized, and makes duties and tasks manageable.

Create a good study environment: creating a soothing environment can help reduce stress

and increase learning capacity.

Develop Optimism: people who remain optimistic are healthier, less stressed, and more successful.

Exercise: regular exercise is one of the best ways to release tension and decrease stress. Students can incorporate exercise by walking or biking to school, or doing yoga.

Music: music helps relieve stress and may have cognitive benefits. Playing music can have a calming effect.

Stay organized: clutter can increase stress. Minimize the clutter to minimize stress.

Eat Right: eating a healthful diet can help minimize stress and increase energy.

Breathing Exercises: when the body is stressed, it does not process information properly. A quick way to calm down is to breath properly by taking a few deep breaths and exhalations.

Visualizations: visualizing oneself in a positive way can help the body to detach from a stressful situation and slow down the stress response.

Source: www.stress.about.com/od/studentstress/tp/school_stress.htm

Sleep Affects Kids in School

With the start of the school year, parents must focus on getting their kids on a regular sleep pattern again, however technological gadgets may be sabotaging parents' efforts. Technology is one of the biggest reasons kids don't get enough sleep. Cell phones, Facebook, iPods, and video games keeps kids up later at night.

There are dozens of studies that claim that school performance is linked to adequate sleep. "There's more and more information showing insufficient sleep affects cognitive ability, and emotional and physical well-being," says Dennis Rosen, associate director of the Sleep Disorders Program at [Children's Hospital Boston](#).

According to studies, the majority of sleep deprivation is due to going to bed too late and getting up too early.

According to a National Sleep Foundation poll, only **one in five adolescents get the required nine hours of sleep** on school nights.

There are sleep strategies parents can use to get kids back on track:

Get technology out of the room. The bedroom should be the place only for rest and sleep. That means no televisions, cellphones, iPods, or video games.

Minimize light exposure. Light exposure minimizes the release of melatonin, a hormone which is part of a system that regulates the

sleep-wake cycle causing drowsiness. Anything lighting up will delay the ability to fall asleep.

Develop a pre-sleep routine with kids. Start doing this at an early age. This may include taking a bath, or reading a book. Your child will begin to associate these activities with sleep.

Try a subtle transition. Start sending kids off to bed a little earlier each night, and waking earlier each morning. This should also be done on weekends to keep a regular sleep cycle.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-08-12-kidsleep12_ST_N.htm

October 3: National Walk to School Day

International Walk to School Day is an event that involves communities walking and biking to school on October 3. The event is part of a movement for year-round safe routes to school. Below are some reasons to support walking and biking to school:

It's Fun: walking and biking bring as sense of joy and independence

Builds Healthier Habits: the trip to school is a chance for kids and parents to squeeze in some physical activity

Promotes a Cleaner Environment: replacing car trips to school with walking or biking minimizes congestion and air-polluting emissions

Promotes Safety: encouraging biking and walking to school can help build support for infrastructure improvements and developments in the broader community

Community Benefits: reducing traffic congestion, boosting a sense of community, and improving neighborhood connections benefits the community

Start your own walk-to-school group in your community!

Walk or bike from home: for students and families who live close to school on a route that's appropriate

Identify and designate a starting point: for families who live too far to walk or bike, or with limited routes. Identify a location where your group will meet and start the walk or bike.

Walk or Bike AT school: for families who live too far to walk or bike, or children with disabilities. Walk during an assembly, recess, or as part of a class activity.

To find local connections and information go to www.walkbiketoschool.org



Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Gangs cont'd

rules about technology use. If you find evidence of cyberbullying, don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.

- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record dates, times, and descriptions. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying.
- Report cyberbullying to online service providers.
- Report cyberbullying to the social media site so they can take action against users abusing the terms of service.
- Report Cyberbullying to Schools. The school can use the information to help inform prevention and response strategies.

What can I do if I encounter a problem?

The Problem	What you can do
There has been a crime or someone is at immediate risk of harm.	Call 911
Someone is feeling hopeless, helpless, thinking of suicide	Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in our national network. These centers provide 24-hour crisis counseling and mental health referrals.
Someone is <u>acting differently</u> than normal, such as always seeming sad or anxious, struggling to complete tasks, or not being able care for themselves	Find a local counselor or other mental health services
A child is being bullied in school	Contact the: Teacher School counselor School principal School superintendent State Department of Education See more on working with the school .
The school is not adequately addressing harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion.	Contact: School superintendent State Department of Education U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division

Information on Gangs continued on page 10



Metropolitan Washington Gang Conference

COG DPSH is organizing and hosting a regional gang conference September 25—28 that discusses the gang problem in the region.

Topics of discussion include a policy briefing session for law enforcement and elected officials. During this session the Assistant State's Attorney from Maryland and Virginia will provide attendees with information on current gang laws and policies for each state.

Additionally, guest speaker Hakim Hazim from Relevant Now Consultancy in Los Angeles will provide research expertise in the areas of sociological intelligence, realism, mentoring, the radicalization process, urban and social decay, and law enforcement approaches to the mentally ill and cognitively challenged.

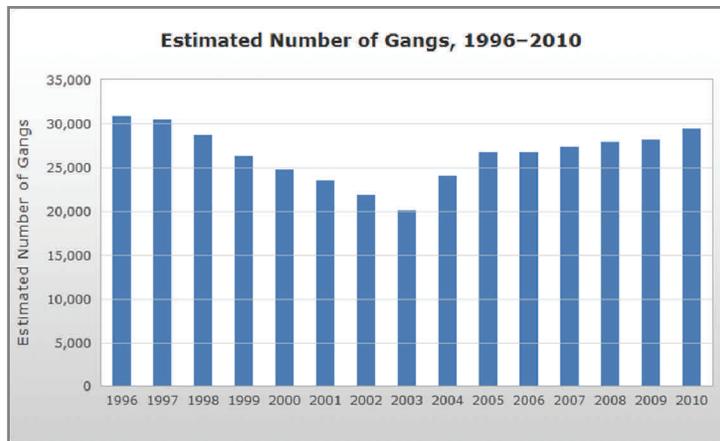
Gang trends in the region will be discussed, as well as sex trafficking, community led best practices, family counseling, and mental health and gangs.

Online registration is available at www.mwcog.org

Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Gangs cont'd

Gangs

What is the status of gangs in the US? All 50 states and DC currently experience gang problems. Local youth gangs increased over a period of 25 years, reaching a peak in the mid 1990's. Currently, it is estimated that there are almost 30,000 gangs in the US (see table below)



What is the demographic distribution of gangs? In 2008, 50% of all gang members were Hispanic; 32% were African American, and 11% were Caucasian. The male to female ratio was 2:1.

How do gangs form? Youths make a conscious decision to join gangs, and many environmental, and personal factors influence this decision. Some youths initially get involved in starter gangs; starter gangs are a means of introducing themselves to gang culture.

What factors contribute to youth joining gangs? Youth

join gangs for protection, enjoyment, respect, money. Youth at higher risk of joining gangs:

- Are involved in delinquent behavior
- Are aggressive, violent,
- Experience multiple caretaker transitions
- Have many problems in school
- Associate with other gang-

active in a child's life, and to have open communication so they know who their friends are and with whom to spend their time.

What actions can a parent take to help their child resist gang involvement?

- Identify conditions that could leave your child susceptible to gang involvement
- Communicate openly about your concerns, and let them talk to you
- Seek support from professionals, such as a school counselor, or principal; many school or community-based programs support youth who are at risk.

Additional resources:

- Northern Virginia: www.preventgangsnova.org
- Montgomery County: www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/pio/gang/index.asp
- PG County: PG: www.layc-dc.org/index.php/md-programs/social-services/gang-prevention.html
- Additional resources and source for this article: www.stopbullying.gov

“Youths make a conscious decision to join gangs, and many environmental and personal factors influence this decision”

Obesity: Complex but Conquerable

The United States faces an alarming obesity problem. We are quick to blame individuals for eating too much or exercising too little, but in truth, the causes are more complex and involve many factors. The Institute of Medicine's poster, *Obesity: Complex But Conquerable*, illustrates the recommendations from the recent report, *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. This poster depicts both the magnitude of the obesity problem in the United States and the effect on our health and economy.

Currently, 1 out of 3 children is overweight or obese. Childhood obesity can lead to such health issues as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, and depression. Additionally, overweight and obesity.

The five essential areas that need improvement include:

Physical activity: Americans have decreased their physical activity levels, including less walking and bike to places.

Food and Beverages: the quality of food in the US has decreased, foods contain a lot of fat, sugar, salt, and preservatives, and are higher in calories. Portion sizes have increased, as well as consumption of sodas and sugary drinks.

Marketing: marketing of highly refined, fatty, unhealthy foods has increased. Most of these ads target young children.

Additionally, time spent in front of a television or computer has increased, thereby increasing the amount of time young children are exposed to such ads.

Healthcare and Workplace: Healthcare providers and employers are not taking full advantage of their opportunity to prevent obesity

Schools: foods and drink available at schools are often high-calories, low-nutrition foods offered throughout the school day. Additionally, there is less time or budget allocated for physical education and physical activity programs.

5 changes to incorporate into yours and family's life

-Provide healthy snacks and meals in smaller portion sizes, and avoid sodas and sugary drinks

-Incorporate physical activity every day in any way possible

-Eat meals together at the table, instead of in front of the TV or computer

-Buy fresh fruit, and vegetables from farmer's markets, and incorporate at least one fruit and vegetable in every meal

-Turn off the TV or computer and go for a walk or bike ride as a family

OBESITY: COMPLEX BUT CONQUERABLE

THE UNITED STATES FACES AN ALARMING OBESITY PROBLEM. WE ARE QUICK TO BLAME INDIVIDUALS FOR EATING TOO MUCH OR EXERCISING TOO LITTLE, BUT IN TRUTH, THE CAUSES ARE MORE COMPLEX AND INVOLVE MANY FACTORS.

THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION

- 1 OUT OF 3 CHILDREN ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE
- 2 OUT OF 3 ADULTS ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE
- \$190.2 BILLION ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF OBESITY-RELATED ILLNESS
- 21% OF ANNUAL MEDICAL SPENDING IS ON OBESITY-RELATED ILLNESS
- \$4.3 BILLION IN ANNUAL LOSSES TO BUSINESSES BECAUSE OF OBESITY-RELATED JOB ABSENTISM

5 ESSENTIAL AREAS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMERICANS HAVE BECOME MORE RELIANT ON CARS, AND WALKING AND BIKING HAVE DECREASED.

- 4.1% (1977) vs 2.8% (2008) PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS WALKING TO WORK
- 19% OF AMERICANS GET THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- 20.2% (1977) vs 12.5% (2001) PERCENT OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WALKING TO SCHOOL

FOOD AND BEVERAGES OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS, CALORIE INTAKE HAS INCREASED, AND HIGH-CALORIE FOODS ARE OFTEN AVAILABLE IN LARGE PORTION SIZES AT RELATIVELY LOW PRICES.

- 1,996 (1977-1974) vs 2,234 (2005-2008) CALORIES CONSUMED PER DAY BY ADULTS
- 30-40 PERCENT OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS EAT FAST FOOD ON A GIVEN DAY
- 20% OF WEIGHT INCREASE IN THE U.S. BETWEEN 1977 AND 2007 IS ATTRIBUTED TO SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

MARKETING THE MOST FREQUENTLY MARKETED FOODS AND BEVERAGES ARE HIGHER IN ADDED FATS AND SUGARS, AND AMERICANS ALREADY EAT AND DRINK TOO MUCH OF THESE FOODS AND BEVERAGES.

- 7.5 HOURS OF MEDIA EACH DAY OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS CONSUME MORE THAN
- 87% OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADS SEEN BY CHILDREN AGES 6-8 ON TV ARE FOR PRODUCTS HIGH IN SATURATED FAT, SUGAR, OR SODIUM

HEALTH CARE & WORKPLACE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS ARE NOT TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO PREVENT OBESITY.

- 1/4 OF AN EMPLOYED ADULT'S LIFE IS SPENT AT THE WORKPLACE
- MANY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS DO NOT FEEL PREPARED OR COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING WEIGHT WITH PATIENTS

SCHOOLS FOODS AND DRINKS AVAILABLE AT SCHOOLS ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT THAN THEY WERE A FEW DECADES AGO, WITH MANY SCHOOLS NOW OFFERING AND PROMOTING HIGH-CALORIE, LOW-NUTRITION FOODS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY.

- UP TO 1/2 OF CHILDREN'S WAKING HOURS ARE SPENT IN SCHOOL
- 41.6% (1997) vs 33.3% (2009) PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTENDING DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

5 SOLUTIONS FOR CHANGING OUR COMMUNITIES

- INTEGRATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY
- STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS AS THE HEART OF HEALTH
- MARKET WHAT MATTERS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE
- EAT WELL!
- ON THEIR OWN, ANY ONE OF THESE FIVE SOLUTIONS MIGHT HELP SPEED UP PROGRESS IN PREVENTING OBESITY, BUT TOGETHER, THEIR EFFECT WOULD BE REINFORCED, AMPLIFIED, AND MAXIMIZED.
- ACTIVATE EMPLOYERS AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
- MAKE HEALTHY FOODS AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE

ANYONE AND EVERYONE CAN BE A LEADER AND PLAY A PART IN IMPLEMENTING THESE FIVE SOLUTIONS. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOLVE OUR OBESITY PROBLEM?

FOR SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THESE SOLUTIONS, SEE THE IOM REPORT *ACCELERATING PROGRESS IN OBESITY PREVENTION: SOLVING THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION* (DOI/EDU/ACCELERATINGOBESITYPREVENTION). SOURCES: FULL DATA ON REFERENCES CAN BE FOUND IN *ACCELERATING PROGRESS IN OBESITY PREVENTION: SOLVING THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION*.

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In the next issue:

- World AIDS Day, where are we today?
- Preventing weight gain during the holiday season
- Ringing in the new year safely
- Heart Health

We want to hear from you!

Please send any feedback or suggestions to
health@mwkog.org.

Brought to you by the Department of Public Safety and
Health: Health and Substance Abuse Programs

Recipe of the
Month

Spicy Orange Slaw

Sweet orange juice concentrate and tangy lime juice create a richly flavored dressing base with zero fat. Roasted pumpkin seeds, also known as pepitas, can be found on Mexican dry-goods displays in most super-markets

- 2 cups packaged grated carrots
- 2 cups packaged shredded purple cabbage
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup roasted pumpkin seeds
- 3 Tbs. thawed frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp. coarse salt



Combine all ingredients in medium bowl, and toss well to mix. Serve as a side to grilled salmon or enjoy on it's own!

Recipe from Vegetarian Times

SMOKEFREE TEXTS

SmokefreeTXT is a mobile service designed for young adults across the US and was created to provide 24/7 encouragement, advice, and tips to help smokers stop smoking for good.

To sign up:

Text the word QUIT to IQUIT (47848) from your mobile phone. Answer a few questions, and you'll start receiving messages.

Coming November: COG's Second Annual Health Week.

Join us November 5—9 for a weeklong health event with daily activities Monday—Thursday 12—1pm and a Health Fair Friday from 11—4pm

Activities include:

- Vision Screenings
 - Seminar with a registered Nutritionist
 - Screening of HBO's Emmy winning "Weight of the Nation"
 - One-on-one consultation with a registered Chiropractor
 - Women's and Men's Health screenings
 - Oral Health Assessments
 - Zumba, Pilates, and Yoga classes
- Plus free giveaways and much more!**