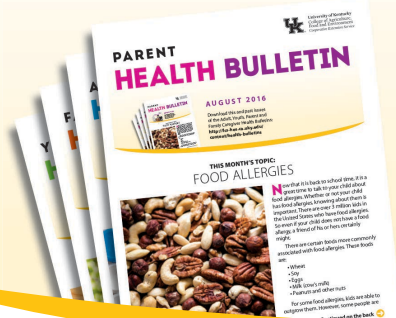




PARENT

HEALTH BULLETIN



FEBRUARY 2017

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S HEART



There are more than 60 million Americans with heart disease. In fact, you may already know someone who has the disease. Although heart disease is not a major cause of death for children, some of the risk factors for the disease are behaviors that can be influenced throughout childhood.

There are many factors that affect an individual's chance of developing heart disease. Some of these risk factors are uncontrollable and cannot be changed. These include aging and family history. As one ages, there is an increase in the likelihood of developing heart disease. If you have family members who have heart disease, then there is a greater risk that you will develop heart disease.

Controllable risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and physical inactivity. Prevention really is the best way to address these risk factors and help your child avoid problems later in life.

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High blood pressure

Your child's blood pressure is something that should be checked at their yearly well-check. High blood pressure is not common among children, but can be serious. Some ways you can help your child stay away from high blood pressure is to watch their diet and keep them active.

High cholesterol

Having high cholesterol leads to build ups in the body's arteries. Studies have shown that these build ups can start in childhood and keep growing as your child ages. To help prevent build ups in the arteries, your child should get lots of exercise. In fact, it is recommended that children get 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Also, try to have your child eat foods that are lower in cholesterol and fat.

Help keep your child's heart healthy by watching out for heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and physical inactivity.

Obesity

Obesity is another risk factor for heart disease. Childhood obesity has continued to be an issue for many Americans. In Kentucky, 17 percent of children age 2 to 19 are obese. Some ways you can help your child manage their weight include:

- Avoiding the use of food as a reward for good grades or good behavior
- Eating meals as a family
- Knowing what your child eats at school
- Increasing your child's physical activity level
- Limiting the amount of time your child spends in front of a screen

Physical inactivity

When people are not active, they have a higher risk for heart disease. Being inactive also increases



your risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity. When Children are physically active on a regular basis they are better able to control their weight, strengthen their bones and improve their heart's strength. Being physically active can also improve a child's self-esteem.

Every parent wants their child to be healthy. Help keep your child's heart healthy by watching out for heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and physical inactivity.

SOURCES:

- Kentucky cabinet for Health and Family Services — Obesity
- CDC.gov

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