Better Ways to BATTLE BUGS

Lace Up Your Running Shoes

BOUNCING BACK FROM Overuse Injuries
Lay It on Thick!

STUDIES SHOW THAT MOST PEOPLE APPLY ONLY 20 TO 60 PERCENT OF THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF SUNSCREEN.

TO MAKE SURE you slather on enough sunscreen to get a product’s full protection, squeeze enough to cover the full length and width of your index and middle fingers and use this amount for each of the following areas:

• Head, ears, neck and face
• Arms
• Upper and lower back
• Upper and lower front torso
• Legs
• Tops of both feet

Make sure everyone wears hats, sunglasses and protective clothing, and remember to apply sunscreen every two hours or more frequently after swimming or sweating – no sunscreen is truly waterproof.

Be mindful of your littlest sunbathers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting sunscreen use on infants until they are 6 months old. It’s better to keep those babies inside, since they can’t regulate body temperature well and their skin is very sensitive.

A dermatologist can help answer your skin questions. Visit meriter.com/dermatology for more information.

Buzz-Kill

YOUR KIDS ARE headed off to camp – and you don’t want them coming home covered in mosquito bites or ticks. Here’s how to keep them protected:

• Repellents with the active ingredients picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are effective and long lasting, but the latter should be used only on children age 3 or older.
• Despite its bad reputation, DEET can be used safely, and it’s very effective against ticks. Look for DEET-based products containing 30 percent or less of the chemical. Products containing DEET should not be used on children younger than 2 months old.
• Avoid products that mix insect repellents with sunscreen; the need to reapply sunscreen frequently can overexpose children to a repellent’s active ingredient.
• Herbal and botanical sprays may seem like good natural alternatives, but many aren’t considered insecticides by the Environmental Protection Agency and haven’t been tested for their effectiveness. They may not work as advertised and also may provoke allergic reactions.

Concerned about a reaction to a bug bite? Call your family’s Meriter clinic for advice.

Taking Care IN THE TROPICS

TRAVELING TO TROPICAL, sunny locales is a great way to spend your summer. Plan ahead to prevent illness from impacting your family’s fun.

Four to six weeks before takeoff, check travel advisories from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov/travel to see if the country or area you’re visiting has any tropical illnesses of note. Then, visit your primary care provider to see if your family needs vaccinations before you leave.

Keep in mind that vaccines aren’t available for all of the bugs you may encounter. For example, there are no vaccines for the mosquito-borne illnesses chikungunya and dengue fever, which are increasingly common in vacation hotspots, such as the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Simple safety precautions, including wearing bug spray, frequently washing your hands and drinking bottled water while abroad can reduce your family’s chances of getting sick.

Getting ready for a family trip? Visit meriter.com/travel to make sure you’re prepared with a travel medicine appointment.
Born to Run

**NEED TO GET ACTIVE, BUT DON’T WANT TO JOIN A GYM? RUN! ALL IT COSTS YOU IS A GOOD PAIR OF SHOES.**

**RUNNING DOESN’T JUST** get you up and moving – it’s an excellent source of cardiovascular exercise. It’s also one you can do with your friends or family, and exercising with other people helps you stick to a routine. If you’re new to the world of running, use these tips to get started smartly and safely.

- **Be realistic.** Don’t push yourself too far or too hard as a beginner. Listen to your body, and stay at a pace and distance you’re comfortable with. Also, set attainable goals: Pledge to run a 5K race rather than a marathon in your first year. Get help from a couch-to-5K program or smartphone app.
- **Warm up.** Do some light cardio or active stretching, such as jumping jacks, to get your muscles warm and ward off potential injury. Do your major stretching afterwards; stretching cold muscles increases the chances that you might injure yourself.
- **Hydrate.** Be sure to drink water before, after and even during your workout to ward off dehydration, particularly in the heat of summer.
- **Choose smooth terrain.** Greenways and sidewalks are better for beginners than uneven trails. Running on an even surface reduces the risk of injury and stress on your joints.

**Red Alert**

**KNOWING THE SIGNS OF VARIOUS HEAT ILLNESSES CAN HELP KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE WHILE THEY PLAY OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER.**

**WHEN IT COMES** to dealing with high temperatures and humidity, your children are at a disadvantage compared to you – they absorb heat faster, sweat less and adjust to hot weather slower than adults do. Keep an eye out for the following heat-related conditions:

**HEAT CRAMPS**
These are painful sensations in the arms, legs or stomach that occur when the muscles lose salts after high-intensity activity in hot weather. Encourage your child to stretch and sip water.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION**
Dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating and a mild fever are typical symptoms of heat exhaustion. Rest and fluid replenishment may solve moderate cases, but severe episodes, which may include fainting, deserve immediate medical attention.

**HEATSTROKE**
Sudden reddening of the skin, lack of sweat and a fever greater than 105 degrees indicate heatstroke, a medical emergency that requires a call to 911 or a visit to the emergency room.

- If your child experiences symptoms of heat illness, the staff at the Meriter Hospital Emergency Room can help. For more information, visit meriter.com/emergency.

Ready to get started? Join our free Couch to 5K class, which begins in August. Learn more at meriter.com/classes.
Getting Back in Step

OVERUSE INJURIES FORCED 10-YEAR-OLD MADELINE MARTEN TO TAKE TIME OFF FROM HER FAVORITE ACTIVITY, DANCE. NOW, SHE AND HER PARENTS HAVE A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON HOW TO BALANCE ACTIVITIES, AND SHE’S BACK TO PERFECTING HER MOVES.

LAST YEAR, MADELINE, a fourth-grader in Verona, developed discomfort in her left foot due to the cumulative physical stress of participating in karate, gymnastics and dance.

“The pain came and went for six months,” Madeline said. “My foot hurt more after gymnastics than after dance, particularly when I would lead off into a cartwheel.”

Many young athletes like Madeline who experience injuries can point to the same culprit: overuse. Failing to adequately rest during or between sports seasons, playing the same sport year-round, or jumping back into sports after the off-season can push children’s bodies to their limits. Half of pediatric sports-related injuries are the result of overuse, because bones, growth plates and soft tissues experience repetitive stress. The most commonly affected areas are the knees, feet, elbows and shoulders.

“Madeline’s pain would disappear for a while and then return in a different area of her foot, so we thought she was developing different injuries,” said Madeline’s mother, Michelle. “Finally, the discomfort became constant, so we knew it was time to investigate.”

Finding Answers

In October 2014, the Martens broached the subject of Madeline’s foot during her annual well-child visit with Dana Johnson, M.D., pediatrician at the Meriter McKee clinic. Dr. Johnson didn’t like...
what she saw on an X-ray of Madeline’s foot, so she referred Madeline to Beth Weinman, D.O., sports medicine physician at Meriter – UnityPoint Health. When Dr. Weinman saw Madeline in early November, she diagnosed the young athlete with apophysitis, which is irritation of the spot where tendon attaches to bone.

“It is a common cause of sports- or dance-related pain due to overuse in growing children,” said Dr. Weinman, who is also the health care provider for the Madison Ballet and Edgewood College. “An MRI showed that Madeline had apophysitis of the bone on the outside of the foot, and the MRI picked up two stress fractures in her foot.”

Madeline and her mother not only appreciated the diagnosis, but they also appreciated the way Dr. Weinman interacted with Madeline.

“Dr. Weinman didn’t just tell me what was wrong – she showed me,” Madeline said. “When I asked questions, she answered in ways I could understand.”

“Madeline is old enough to ask her own questions, and it was better for her and Dr. Weinman to connect directly rather than through me,” Michelle said. “Dr. Weinman was very kid-friendly.”

Results Worth Dancing About

Dr. Weinman prescribed a walking boot to relieve the weight-bearing pressure on Madeline’s foot, which gave the injuries time to heal. Madeline wore the boot for eight weeks. Afterward, she completed physical therapy before resuming dance classes in the spring free of pain.

“It is amazing how much better young athletes with overuse injuries get with a bit of rest,” Dr. Weinman said. “Early detection and treatment are important.”

If diagnosed early, time in a walking boot is often shorter. Dr. Weinman advises parents to take any complaints children have about aches and pains seriously, and Michelle has taken that advice to heart.

“We are definitely vigilant about not letting Madeline stray back into overuse,” Michelle says. “If she complains of pain again, we’ll look into it quickly.”

Does your child have a lingering sports-related injury? Don’t let it persist any longer. Visit meriter.com/sportsmedicine to find a sports medicine physician and to learn about available services.
The Road to Parenthood

BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY BY MAXIMIZING WELLNESS BEFORE YOU START TRYING FOR BABY. THESE FIVE STEPS CAN HELP YOU PREPARE FOR PREGNANCY AND NEW MOTHERHOOD.

1 Visit your women’s health care provider. Even if you see your OB/GYN annually, a dedicated preconception visit gives him or her an opportunity to address health conditions that may be harmful during pregnancy, such as anemia, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and thyroid disease.

2 Watch your diet. Eating a healthy prenatal diet before you get pregnant means one less lifestyle adjustment once you’re expecting. Cut back on caffeine and alcohol, which can impact your fertility and be harmful to baby, and emphasize foods rich in folic acid, iron and calcium.

3 Chart your ovulation. If you’re trying to get pregnant, tracking your monthly cycle can help identify when you’re most fertile. During your preconception visit, ask your OB/GYN which fertility tracking method is best.

4 Exercise – but not too intensely. Research suggests women who get 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week may have an easier time getting pregnant than both those who are sedentary and those who exercise strenuously for more than three to five hours each week.

5 Pop a prenatal vitamin. It’s the easiest way to get the recommended 400 to 800 micrograms of daily folic acid, an important nutrient that helps prevent birth defects during the first trimester.

INFERTILITY: NOT JUST A WOMAN’S CONCERN

When couples have difficulty conceiving, many women believe their health is to blame, but infertility also affects men. “Male infertility plays a role in up to 50 percent of cases,” said Brian Le, M.D., urologist at Meriter McKee clinic. “Typically, if a couple has failed to conceive within one year of unprotected intercourse, both partners should be evaluated. A urologist can help men by identifying and correcting potential factors that impair sperm count and function.”

There are many possible reasons for male infertility, Dr. Le said, including hormonal imbalances; lifestyle factors, such as frequently using hot tubs or lubricant; and varicocele, an overgrowth of veins in the scrotum that can impact sperm production. Varicocele can be corrected with surgery, and urologists can suggest medications or modifications to lifestyle and diet that can help resolve or improve infertility issues.

To learn more, visit meriter.com/urology.
DON’T WAIT — Vaccinate

THIS YEAR, MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD’S IMMUNIZATIONS ARE UP-TO-DATE BEFORE HE OR SHE HEADS BACK TO SCHOOL.

YOUNG CHILDREN AREN’T the best at avoiding germs, so when one child gets sick, it’s almost a given that it will get passed to other children in their class. That’s why most schools require vaccinations for students to enroll, particularly for highly contagious illnesses, such as measles.

Protection from vaccinations extends beyond your child, as well. Some children with allergies, weakened immune systems or other health concerns may not be able to receive them.

Elementary school-age children should be up-to-date on the following immunizations:

- **MMR** – protects against measles, mumps and rubella
- **IPV** – protects against polio
- **Varicella** – protects against chickenpox and lowers your child’s risk of developing shingles later in life
- **Influenza** – protects against the flu each year
- **DTaP** – protects against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough)
- **Hib** – protects against Haemophilus influenza type b, a bacterial infection that can cause lifelong disability or even death
- **PCV13** – protects against 13 strains of pneumococcal bacteria
- **Hep B** – protects against the hepatitis B virus

Older children ages 11 to 12 should receive the first dose of the MCV4 vaccine, which protects against four strains of meningococcal disease and is given in two doses. A second dose is typically given between ages 16 and 18. The HPV vaccine protects children from the types of human papillomavirus (HPV) that cause most cases of cervical cancer and is given in three doses over a six-month period to both boys and girls between ages 11 and 26.

Parents of new babies also need pertussis boosters, as infants are too young to be vaccinated against this potentially serious illness. Mothers should receive this booster during the third trimester of pregnancy.

**OUTMANEUVERING MEASLES**

Worldwide, measles infects 20 million people each year, 146,000 of whom die. In the United States, a safe, readily available vaccine helps prevent this dangerous disease from spreading and claiming lives.

“Measles is a serious and highly contagious disease, and the vaccine helps prevent it from being both caught and spread,” said Karen Reed, M.D., family medicine physician at the Meriter McKee clinic. “I recommend all individuals who are medically capable of getting the vaccine do so.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends getting the full two doses of the measles vaccine to gain full protection. A full course results in 97 percent immunity and protects those who are too young or ill to be vaccinated as well.

To schedule an appointment for your child’s vaccines, visit meriter.com/clinics.

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