

YOUR BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECKLIST

The back-to-school season can mean a busy rush, from getting new supplies to juggling sports schedules! Parents: You've Got This!! To help, here's a quick, but important, checklist. It highlights some ways to help your kiddos have a healthier school year.

Make sure shots are up to date. Immunizations help protect kids and teens—and all of us—from serious diseases. Think flu, measles, meningitis and whooping cough, just to name a few. Have a preteen? Ask your child's doctor about HPV vaccines. This series of shots helps protect both girls and boys against conditions caused by the human papillomavirus, including cervical cancer.

Schedule a check-up. All kids need well-child exams. Is your child due for one? These regular wellness visits are a great way to ensure that children and teens get the vaccines they need. They should also include a BMI (body mass index) check that's specific to children and teens. Will your children be playing sports? If you haven't already, schedule a sport's physical so you can mark that off your list.

Get sleep back on track. After a summer of late nights, waking up early may be a struggle for kids. To help younger kids adjust, start to move bedtimes and wake-up times earlier as the first week of school approaches. Worried this is a losing battle with older kids? You might encourage moving toward a healthier sleep schedule by gradually limiting electronic use in the evenings and rolling back summertime curfews. Talk with kids so they understand the goal is their well-being—to help them be their best when school starts.

Set the wheels of safety turning. Before school starts, it's a good idea to practice your child's walking or biking route. Depending on how your child gets to school, you may want to review some safety basics, such as:

- Obey all traffic lights and stop signs.
- Look both ways before crossing streets and driveways.
- Wear a helmet when biking.
- Always buckle your seatbelt.
- Never text while walking or driving.

Feed young brains. Kids need both a nutritious breakfast and lunch—think of it as fuel for learning. If you want your child to have a school lunch account, ask for any forms you need to complete. Some schools have breakfast and lunch options. Free or discounted meals may be available. If you are making your child's lunch, get tips to pack foods that stay safe from germs. To make sure good food doesn't go to waste, involve kids in lunch planning. If they're invested in what's packed, they may be more likely to eat it.

School is an exciting part of your child's life and prepares them for their future. By planning ahead with your child, you can make decisions to make both their lives and your days healthier and happier! Welcome back to school! Have fun and be healthy!

Source: 2018 United HealthCare Services, Inc.

Your parish nurse,

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