



HEALTH NEWS

Health Information For Students and Their Families



Welcome, spring! While allergy season can be challenging for many, the arrival of warmer temperatures and longer days brings a wave of positivity. Increased sunlight naturally boosts serotonin production—the "feel-good" hormone—helping to elevate mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. As the days grow longer and brighter, we often feel more energized and inspired to embrace outdoor activities, connect with loved ones, and explore creative pursuits. Take advantage of the season by soaking up the sunshine, enjoying nature, and making meaningful memories with friends and family!

Guidance for Parents Regarding the Current Measles Outbreak Across the U.S.

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms usually appear 7–14 days after exposure and include:

- ✓ High fever
- ✓ Cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes
- ✓ White spots inside the mouth (Koplik spots)
- ✓ Flat red rash that starts on the face and spreads downward



As of March 10, 2025, the United States is experiencing a significant measles outbreak, particularly in Texas and New Mexico, but also with cases here in New Jersey. The outbreak began in late January and has rapidly expanded, with over 200 confirmed cases and at least two deaths reported.

Why is This Important?

Measles can lead to serious complications, especially in young children, pregnant women, and individuals with weakened immune systems. The best protection is vaccination.

How to Protect Your Child

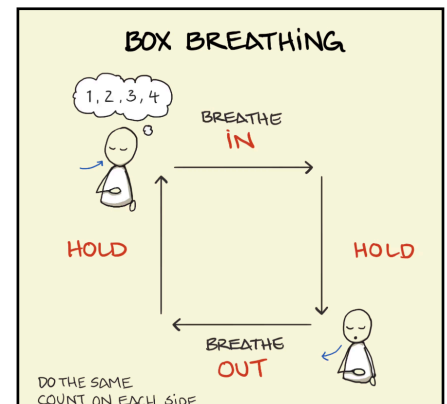
- ✓ Check Vaccination Status – Ensure your child is up-to-date on the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses are 97% effective in preventing measles. If unsure, contact your child's doctor.
- ✓ Watch for Symptoms – If your child has symptoms of measles, keep them home and call your healthcare provider immediately.
- ✓ Avoid Exposure – Measles spreads before symptoms appear, so be cautious in crowded places, especially if traveling.

Ensuring that you and your family are up-to-date with vaccinations is the best protection against measles. If your child has a rash with fever, cough, or red eyes, keep them home and call your doctor right away. Do not visit a clinic without calling first to avoid spreading illness.

Feeling Stressed?

Try **box breathing** to calm your mind. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold again for 4 seconds. Repeat for a few minutes to reduce anxiety and improve focus. Your body will thank you!

Stay well and breathe easy!



Rise in Myopia (Nearsightedness)

Increased screen time and reduced outdoor activities have been linked to a higher risk of myopia in children. A daily increment of one hour spent on digital screens increases the risk by 21%. Experts

recommend limiting screen time, promoting outdoor activities, and ensuring regular eye check-ups to mitigate this risk.

Myopia rates have increased from 25% in the 1970s to 42% today. By 2050, nearly 50% of people are expected to be nearsighted. Myopia typically starts between ages 6-14 and worsens until the early 20s. Genetics and environmental factors, including excessive near-vision work (screens, books, studying), contribute to myopia. Degenerative myopia can cause thinning of the eye wall, retinal damage, and vision impairment.



Managing Seasonal Allergies

Springtime pollen can lead to sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion. Help your child by:

- ✓ Checking pollen levels before outdoor play.
- ✓ Encouraging handwashing to remove allergens.
- ✓ Using air purifiers or keeping windows closed during high pollen days.



Hidden Veggie Meatballs

Here's a sneaky way to get veggies in your kids, with finely shredded zucchini and carrot mixed right in with the ground meat.

Ingredients:

1-2 large carrots, shredded	1 zucchini, shredded
1 lb ground beef	1 lb ground pork
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese	¼ cup minced yellow onion
¼ cup minced fresh parsley	2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper	2 cloves grated garlic
2 large eggs	1 cup Italian bread crumbs
marinara sauce, as needed	16 oz spaghetti, cooked

- Place the shredded carrot and zucchini on a clean towel and wring out as much liquid as possible.
- Add the carrot and zucchini to a large bowl, along with the ground beef, ground pork, Parmesan, onion, parsley, salt, pepper, garlic powder, eggs, and bread crumbs. Mix until just combined.
- Scoop about ¼ cup of the meat mixture at a time and roll into balls.
- Pan-fry the meatballs in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat until all sides are golden brown, about 10 minutes, then add the marinara sauce and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Alternatively, bake the meatballs on a parchment-lined baking sheet at 350°F for 30-35 minutes, flipping after the first 15 minutes. Warm up marinara sauce and serve on the side.
- Serve the meatballs with cooked spaghetti and Parmesan cheese.

Protecting Children's Vision

Limit Screen Time: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a daily screen time limit of two hours. Parents should set boundaries and model healthy screen habits.

Follow the 20/20/20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, children should look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Increase Outdoor Time: Studies show spending time outside can delay or prevent myopia.

Regular Eye Exams: Children should have routine eye screenings at key developmental stages, starting from infancy.

These preventive measures can help safeguard children's eye health in an increasingly digital world.



Outdoor Spring Activities



Regular physical activity is essential for maintaining a healthy weight and promoting overall well-being. Try some of these activities now that the weather nice out.

- Nature Walk & Scavenger Hunt** – Make a list of things to find (flowers, birds, bugs) and have kids walk and explore.
- Bike Riding** – Ride around the neighborhood or in a local park.
- Jump Rope Challenge** – Try different jump rope games like double dutch or speed jumping.
- Obstacle Course** – Set up cones, hula hoops, and small hurdles for an outdoor challenge.
- Sidewalk Chalk Fitness** – Draw hopscotch, agility ladders, or exercise stations.