

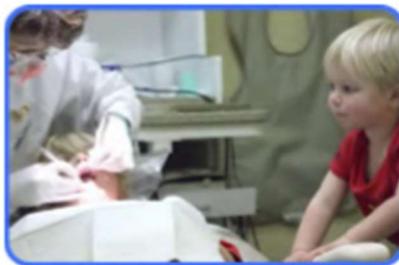


February 2018

FEBRUARY IS
NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S DENTAL
HEALTH MONTH



- **Find the right dental team.** Encourage parents to ask family members and friends who were afraid of dental visits to recommend a dental team that has helped them overcome their fear. Help parents find a dental office or clinic that knows how to reduce anxiety about dental visits.
- **Bring someone along.** Recommend that parents bring a trusted family member or friend who is not afraid of dental visits to sit with them during their appointment.
- **Talk with the dental team.** Urge parents to talk to the dental team about their fears. The dental team can help make parents feel comfortable and ease their fears.
- **Ask the dental team for explanations.** Explain to parents that they can ask the dental team to describe things to them in advance. Parents can also ask the dental team to let the parent know what they are doing along the way as well as what to expect next. Parents can offer the dental team suggestions about ways to make the visit more comfortable for the parent.
- **Make a plan to communicate during care.** Encourage parents to talk to the dental team before treatment begins and agree on a signal that shows that the parent is uncomfortable or needs a break.
- **Block out noise.** Parents can wear earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones to block sounds from the dental equipment and instruments. Parents can use earbuds to listen to music on their phone or other device to take their mind off the dental procedure.
- **Use relaxation techniques.** Work with parents to practice and use deep breathing, muscle relaxation, or meditation during their visit. Encourage them to relax their mind and imagine a peaceful place.
- **Consider options for comfort.** Help parents schedule visits at a time when they are not stressed or rushed. Parents can bring nasal strips if they are worried that they will have trouble breathing. They can also ask to have numbing cream put on their gums before getting a shot. Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) or other options can also be used to reduce stress. If parents find that the position of the dental chair is uncomfortable, encourage them to ask the dental team to adjust it.



Cook's Corner: Teddy Bear Toast

Here's a delicious healthy snack that staff and children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families.

Ingredients

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- ½ banana sliced into 6 pieces
- 6 blueberries



Directions

1. Toast the bread, and spread the peanut butter on the bread.
2. Place 2 banana pieces on the top corners of each toast slice to make the ears.
3. Place 1 banana piece in the center of the bottom half of each toast slice to make the nose.
4. Place the blueberries on the toast slices to finish the nose and make the eyes above the nose.

Makes 2 servings

Safety tip: An adult should slice the ingredients.

Contact Us

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to health@ecetta.info or call 866-763-6481.

Subscribe or view all issues of [Brush Up on Oral Health](#) on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.

This issue was developed with funds from grant #90HC0013 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Office of Child Care, and Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau by the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

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School readiness begins with health!



American Heart Month

Heart Disease: It Can Happen at Any Age

Heart disease doesn't happen just to older adults. It is happening to younger adults more and more often. This is partly because the conditions that lead to heart disease are happening at younger ages. February is Heart Month, the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and the steps you need to take now to help your heart.

Heart disease—and the conditions that lead to it—can happen at any age. High rates of obesity and high blood pressure among younger people (ages 35-64) are putting them at risk for heart disease earlier in life. Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking).

You Could Be at Risk

Many of the conditions and behaviors that put people at risk for heart disease are appearing at younger ages:

- **High blood pressure.** Millions of Americans of all ages have high blood pressure, including millions of people in their 40s and 50s. About half of people with high blood pressure don't have it under control. Having uncontrolled high blood pressure is one of the biggest risks for heart disease and other harmful conditions, such as stroke.
- **High blood cholesterol.** High cholesterol can increase the risk for heart disease. Having diabetes and obesity, smoking, eating unhealthy foods, and not getting enough physical activity can all contribute to unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- **Smoking.** More than 37 million U.S. adults are current smokers, and thousands of young people start smoking each day. Smoking damages the blood vessels and can cause heart disease.

Other conditions and behaviors that affect your risk for heart disease include:

- **Obesity.** Carrying extra weight puts stress on the heart. More than 1 in 3 Americans—and nearly 1 in 6 children ages 2 to 19—has obesity.
- **Diabetes.** Diabetes causes sugar to build up in the blood. This can damage blood vessels and nerves that help control the heart muscle. Nearly 1 in 10 people in the United States has diabetes.
- **Physical inactivity.** Staying physically active helps keep the heart and blood vessels healthy. Only 1 in 5 adults meets the physical activity guidelines of getting 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity.
- **Unhealthy eating patterns.** Most Americans, including children, eat too much [sodium](#) (salt), which increases blood pressure. Replacing foods high in sodium with fresh fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure. But only 1 in 10 adults is getting enough fruits and vegetables each day. Diet high in trans-fat, saturated fat, and added sugar increases the risk factor for heart disease.

4 Ways to Take Control of Your Heart Health

You're in the driver's seat when it comes to your heart. Learn how to be heart healthy at any age.

- **Don't smoke.** Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, [learn how to quit](#).
- **Manage conditions.** Work with your health care team to manage conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. This includes taking any medicines you have been prescribed. Learn more about preventing and managing [high blood pressure](#) and [high cholesterol](#).
- **Make heart-healthy eating changes. Eat food low in trans-fat, saturated fat, added sugar and sodium.** Try to fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruits, and aim for low sodium options. Learn more about [how to reduce sodium](#).
- **Stay active.** Get moving for at least 150 minutes per week. You can even break up the 30 minutes into 10-minute blocks. Learn more about [how to get enough physical activity](#).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/index.html>



Staff Wellness Tips

- **Find a fun water bottle that you can keep at your desk.** You will be more inclined to drink water, and filling the bottle

multiple times a day will increase your daily activity.

- **Make an eating plan.** Prepare healthy to-go foods and lunches. Cut up enough carrots, bell peppers, cucumbers, celery, broccoli, etc to be used in salads and as snacks for the whole week.

Thank you for viewing the February Health Newsletter. If you have questions or suggestions for future health newsletters please contact Tiffany Pigott at tiffanypigott@ncwvcaa.org or the following contact information.

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