February is Children’s Dental Health Month!
By Florida Health

Oral health is vitally important to overall health and well-being. Oral health is much more than just healthy teeth. Oral health is a state of being free from chronic mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral sores, congenital disabilities, periodontal disease, tooth decay and tooth loss, and other disease and disorders that affect the oral cavity.

- Maintaining good oral and physical health requires a multi-faceted approach including a healthy diet, proper exercise, access to health care professionals, and public health initiatives such as fluoridated community water and preventive dental services including dental sealants. Dental disease is preventable through effective health promotion and dental disease prevention programs. Collaborative partnerships among individuals, communities, health care providers, and governing bodies are necessary to achieve optimal oral health in Florida.

- Tooth decay (dental caries) is a transmissible, infectious oral disease resulting from an imbalance of multiple risk factors and protective factors over time. Tooth decay remains the most prevalent chronic infectious disease among children in the United States affecting 1 in 5 (20 percent) children aged 5 to 11 years and 1 in 7 (14 percent) adolescents aged 12 to 19 years. Florida data reveal that about 1 in 4 third-grade children has untreated tooth decay. If dental decay is left untreated, it can cause pain and infection leading to problems with chewing, swallowing, speaking, and learning.

- Though the prevalence and severity of tooth decay have declined among children, it remains a significant problem in some populations, particularly among certain racial and ethnic groups, as well as low-income children. Poor oral health is associated with missing school and poor school performance. Children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school and four times more likely to perform poorly when compared to their healthy counterparts. Additionally, parents miss on average 2.5 days from work per year due to their children’s dental problems.

Below are some helpful hints to keep your child’s mouth healthy:

- Practice good nutrition.
  - Reduce foods high in sugar that promote cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth.
  - Limit the amount of juice, milk, and other sugary beverages (soda, sports drink) your child drinks.
- Protect your child’s teeth with fluoride toothpaste.
  - If your child is younger than age 6, watch your child brush their teeth. Make sure your child only uses a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and always spits it out rather than swallowing it.
  - If your child is younger than age 3, use just a “smear” of toothpaste.
- Have your child visit a dentist for a first checkup by age 1.
- Talk with your dental provider about methods to prevent dental decay such as dental sealants.
  - Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings that are applied to the grooves on the chewing surfaces on the back teeth where approximately 89 percent of decay occurs.
  - To learn more about the Department of Health’s School-Based Sealant Program efforts, please visit www.flhealth.gov/dental/sealants
- Set a good example for your child by brushing your teeth with them at least twice a day.

Medication Adherence: Take Time to Be Sure
By Capital Health Plan

Medication adherence is a vital part of one's overall health. By responsibly taking your medications as prescribed, you can reduce the risk of conditions like heart attack, stroke, or seizure. Some prescription drugs are prescribed to help your body on the inside, such as statins, diabetic medication, beta blockers, and high blood pressure medications. You may not be able to see an immediate response like with pain medication, but they are working. As always, talk to your doctor if you’re having problems before stopping or skipping any medications. Ask if your routine can be simplified. Take your medication daily for a better healthier you on the inside and out!

For more information on medication adherence, visit Capital Health Plan’s Healthwise® Knowledgebase at capitalhealth.com.

The information contained in this newsletter should not be construed as medical advice. Please see your health care provider.
Learn More About Fibromyalgia

By AvMed

Fibromyalgia is a common neurologic health problem that causes widespread pain and tenderness (sensitivity to touch). The pain and tenderness tend to come and go, and move throughout the body. Most often, people with this chronic long-term illness are very tired and have sleep problems. A diagnosis for fibromyalgia can be made with a careful examination.

Fibromyalgia is most common in women, though it can occur in men. It most often starts in middle adulthood, but can occur in the teen years and in old age. You are at higher risk for fibromyalgia if you have health problem that affects the joints, muscles and bones. These include osteoarthritis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, or ankylosing spondylitis (a type of arthritis that affects the spine).

Fibromyalgia Fast Facts

• Fibromyalgia affects 2 to 4 percent of people, women more often than men.
• Fibromyalgia is not an autoimmune or inflammation-based illness, but research suggests the nervous system is involved.
• Doctors diagnose fibromyalgia based on all the patient’s relevant symptoms (what you feel), no longer just on the number of tender places during an examination.
• There is no test to detect this disease, but you may need lab tests or X-rays to rule out other health problems.
• Though there is no cure, medications can reduce symptoms in some patients.
• Patients also may feel better with proper self-care, such as exercise and getting enough sleep.

For more information, visit https://www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Fibromyalgia

Navigating A Changing Landscape: Practical Tips for Handling Life Transitions

By E4Health

On the road of life, the scenery is always changing. And although there’s no real-world Easy Street, learning to manage change can help make life easier to navigate. If an upcoming change or life transition has you feeling concerned, stressed, or anxious, keep the following DOs and DON’Ts in mind to help you best handle whatever may be around the corner.

DO:

• Expect to feel a range of emotions including insecurity, stress, and anxiety. It’s normal to experience different stages until you adjust to a new reality.
• Remember that not all emotions will necessarily be negative. Consider how change might present new or exciting opportunities. Make it a point to explore the positives that can develop as a result of change.
• Anticipate disruption. In the midst of change, many people expect to go on without missing a beat, as if the change were a minor inconvenience. But this attitude isn’t realistic. You will have to allow time to adjust to new situations.
• Be flexible. Change can be unpredictable, and even with the best plans, it can become necessary to pivot. Having contingency plans can increase your likelihood for staying on a positive track.
• Identify a support system. It’s normal to be reluctant about sharing insecurities with others and, in some cases, that’s prudent. But determine who your allies are among your friends and family and keep an open dialog with them about what you’re experiencing. Sharing both ups and downs will allow you to get feedback from someone you trust who can see things from a different perspective.
• Use your State of Florida Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as a free, outside, and confidential avenue for working through your concerns. For professional guidance and resources, EAP counselors are available 24/7 by calling (844) 208-7067.

DON’T:

• Resort to “catastrophic” thinking—that is, jumping to conclusions that the worst-case scenario is going to be the reality. Such a mentality creates unnecessary negativity and is extremely counter-productive. Instead, focus on what you actually know to be true.
• Forget to reward yourself for milestones along the way or small successes. Consistent reinforcement is a key ingredient for positive change along the journey.
• View unforeseen circumstances as failure to prepare. One of the reasons change provokes stress and anxiety is because it’s uncertain. We’re venturing into new territory. While you should try your best to be prepared, resorting to a contingency plan doesn’t mean you’ve failed; it means you’re resilient!

Taco Salad (Serves 2)

Submitted by UnitedHealthcare

Enjoy this reduced-fat, low-calorie version of fast-food taco salad. Although the carb content may seem high for a salad, the carbs are mainly from the beans, which are a rich source of folic acid and fiber.

Ingredients:
- 4 cups lettuce, torn into pieces
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup pinto beans, drained of juice
- 2 ounces baked tortilla chips, broken into pieces
- 1/4 cup salsa
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:
1. Warm the beans and season to taste with salt and pepper to add flavor. If you choose to add ground chicken or turkey, remember that four ounces of meat add about 70 calories per serving.
2. In a salad bowl, mix together the vegetables, pinto beans, and tortilla chips. Add the salsa, and stir gently to blend. Top with 2 tablespoons of shredded cheese.

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 235; Fat: 3.5 g; Carbohydrate: 40 g; Protein: 11 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Fiber: 11 g; Sodium: 213 mg