



# Healthy People Newsletter

JULY 2021

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# National Health Observances

**JULY 2021**

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

National Park and Recreation Month

World Hepatitis Day (28)

**BETTERSAFE**

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

# SAFE SLEEPING FOR BABIES

## What You Can Do to Prevent SIDS

When infants die suddenly, unexpectedly, and without clear medical reason in their sleep, it's called sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Health care providers and researchers don't know the exact causes of SIDS. However, research shows parents and caregivers can take several steps to help reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths.

### RISK FACTORS

All babies are at risk, especially those under 1 year of age. Babies are most vulnerable to SIDS up to 4 months old. One of the critical pieces to SIDS risk reduction is how the baby sleeps. Babies who are sleeping should be on their back. Limit a baby's belly time to when they're awake. A baby shouldn't sleep on their belly or side.

Why does sleep position matter? Sleeping on the belly lowers an infant's blood pressure and reduces their ability to get oxygen to the brain. Between 2 and 4 months old, especially, the reflex to breathe to get more oxygen is repressed when an infant sleeps on their belly.

Researchers also suspect that a brain condition may be a cause of SIDS. They have been studying the part of the brain that controls breathing and heart rate during sleep. They think these babies may not have the reflex to awaken when breathing becomes impaired.

What causes SIDS may not be known, but several things raise the risk. In addition to sleep position, research

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shows that soft bedding above or below your infant is a danger.

There is no need to have a blanket. Instead, dress your baby in sleep clothing, such as a onesie, that's designed to keep them warm. This keeps them safer.

Make sure they're dressed appropriately for the environment, but don't over bundle. Check for signs that they're too hot, like sweating or if their chest is hot to the touch. It's also important to prevent your baby's nose and mouth from becoming covered. The area around them should not have any clutter—no toys, no bumpers.

Experts also advise that you keep your baby in the same room, but not in your bed with you. When you're done feeding, place your baby in their safe area, such as a cradle next to your bed.

The safe sleep environment is the biggest factor that's going to reduce or eliminate the SIDS risk for a baby that's less than a year old.

### HELP PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM SIDS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these are the key steps to helping prevent SIDS

- » Place your baby on his or her back for all sleep times—naps and at night.
- » Use a firm, flat sleep surface, such as a firm mattress covered by a fitted sheet.
- » Keep your baby's sleep area (for example, a crib or bassinet) in the same room where you sleep until your baby is at least 6 months old, or ideally, until your baby is one year old.
- » Keep soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and soft toys out of your baby's sleep area.
- » Do not cover your baby's head or allow your baby to get too hot. Signs your baby may be getting too hot include sweating or his or her chest feels hot.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



# DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

## BLOTCHY SKIN

### Vitiligo Explained

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Skin imperfections can be an annoyance and even stressful. Acne, eczema, and rosacea are a few common skin conditions, but another not so common condition is vitiligo.

#### WHAT IS VITILIGO?

People with vitiligo have patches of white skin. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease. It isn't contagious, but rather a condition in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys the body's own cells.

Normally, your immune system defends your body from germs. But in vitiligo, immune cells kill the cells that produce the skin's color. These pigment cells are called melanocytes.

Sometimes, vitiligo causes areas of hair to go white as well. People with vitiligo may also develop inflammation in the eyes or ears. These parts of the body also contain melanocytes.

#### DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

To diagnose vitiligo, your doctor will look closely at your skin. They may use a special type of light that makes spots of vitiligo look chalky. You might also have a skin sample taken to look for pigment cells.

Vitiligo isn't painful. But some people experience itching while the skin is losing color. Some people feel distressed at the loss of their skin's color. They may develop low self-esteem or a poor self-image from concerns about their appearance.



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Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

Vitiligo can also cause a reduction in quality of life because it tends to involve parts of the body that can't be hidden. But treatments are available. And special makeup can help hide the discoloring.

Some treatments aim to slow or stop the disease from getting worse. Others may restore the skin's color. But these can take time to work. And some areas of the body are easier to treat than others.

A type of light therapy called UVB phototherapy is commonly used to treat the disorder. It uses special lamps that encourage the pigment cells in your skin to regrow. Light therapy works better on some parts of the body than others. For example, it rarely works well on the hands, but can work very well on the face.



Some people may need medications that suppress the immune system. These can be given as skin creams or pills. Staying on top of treatment is important. If someone stops treatment, vitiligo usually comes back.

In severe cases of vitiligo, surgery or bleaching larger areas of the skin to match the white patches may be options. Talk with your health care provider about what steps you can take to help with the condition.

### IF YOU HAVE VITILIGO

Keep these tips and strategies in mind:

- » Protect your skin from the sun. Use sunscreen and wear protective clothes.
- » Avoid touching harsh chemicals and other things that can irritate your skin.
- » Try cosmetics to cover white areas. Talk with your health care provider about which products are safe to use.
- » See an expert. Ask your doctor for a referral to a skin specialist who has experience treating people with vitiligo.
- » Join a support group. Talking with other people with vitiligo can help you learn new ways to cope with the condition.





# TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

## CARING FOR YOUR KIDNEYS

Your kidneys are small but vital organs in your body. They are two bean-shaped organs about the size of your fist. They sit below the rib cage on each side of the body. Kidneys filter blood and they remove waste products and water to make urine. Believe it or not, they filter about a half cup of blood every minute!

Chronic (long-term) kidney disease damages your kidneys so that they can't filter blood properly. Kidney disease is common. Certain people are at higher risk. Diabetes is the leading cause. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) almost one in three people with diabetes has chronic kidney disease. You're also at greater risk for kidney disease if you have high blood pressure or heart disease.

### PROTECT YOUR KIDNEYS

You can take steps to protect your kidneys. Much of what you would do to maintain a healthy lifestyle also help maintain healthy kidneys:

**Eat fruits and veggies and minimize consumption of added sugar and salt.** Try to include fruits and vegetables at every meal and cut back on salt and added sugars. Aim for less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. Try to have less than 10 percent of your daily calories come from added sugars.

**Try to be active every day.** Aim to be active for 30 minutes or more on most days. If you are not active now, ask your health care provider about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you.



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Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

**Work with your health care provider if you're overweight.** If you are overweight or obese work with your health care provider or dietitian to identify a healthy weight and create a realistic weight-loss plan.

**Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.** Try to maintain a solid sleep schedule in which you go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day.

**If you smoke or use other tobacco products, stop.** Ask for help so you don't have to do it alone.

**Limit alcohol.** If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink per day if you are a woman and two drinks per day if you are a man.

### WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

During your next medical visit, you may want to ask your health care provider about your kidney health. Early kidney disease may not have any symptoms, so

getting tested may be the only way to know your kidneys are healthy. Your health care provider will help decide how often you should be tested.

### KEY KIDNEY QUESTIONS

Ask your health care provider the following key questions about your kidney health during your next medical visit. The sooner you know you have kidney disease, the sooner you can get treatment to help protect your kidneys.

- » What should I do to keep my kidneys healthy?
- » Do I need to be taking different medicines?
- » Should I be more physically active?
- » What kind of physical activity can I do?
- » What can I eat?
- » Am I at a healthy weight?
- » Do I need to talk with a dietitian to get help with meal planning?
- » Should I be taking ACE inhibitors or ARBs for my kidneys?







# TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

## PROTECT THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

Now that summer is here it time to shine some light on UV safety. In fact, July is UV Safety Awareness Month!

Most of us love to take in some warm, sunny weather, but it's critical to protect your skin and eyes from the damaging effects of the sun. Unprotected sun exposure can cause:

- » Vision problems and damage to your eyes
- » Suppression of the immune system
- » Premature aging of the skin
- » Skin cancer

Fortunately, there are things you can do to minimize the risk that comes with sun exposure.

### SIMPLE WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN

**Wear sunscreen every day, in all weather and in every season.** The sun can still damage your skin on cloudy days or in the winter. For this reason, it is important to stay protected throughout the year. Wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Make sure the label says "broad-spectrum", which means it protects against the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Put it on at least 15 minutes before going outside.

**Apply and reapply sunscreen generously.**

According to the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, most people apply only 25-50 percent of the recommended amount of sunscreen. When out in the sun, it's important that you apply at least one ounce (a palmful) of sunscreen every two hours. You should apply



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it more often if you are sweating or swimming, even if the sunscreen is waterproof.

**Wear sunglasses with total UV protection.**

Look for labels that confirm the sunglasses offer total protection. You don't have to pay a fortune either—many sunglasses with total protection are very affordable.

**Dress accordingly.** Wearing a hat (preferably wide brimmed) or other shade-protective clothing can partly shield your skin from the harmful effects of UV ray exposure. Proper clothing may also include lightweight and "breathable" long-sleeved shirts and pants.

**Avoid being out in the sun as much as possible from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** The sun's glare is most intense at midday. If you are outside during these hours, try to find some shade to protect your skin.

**Check your skin regularly so you know what's normal for you and to notice any changes or new growths.**

**Choose cosmetics and contact lenses that offer UV protection.** You still need to use sunscreen and wear sunglasses with broad-spectrum sun protection.

**If you're a parent, protect your child's skin and practice those habits together.**

**Don't use tanning beds!**

By learning the risks associated with too much sun exposure and taking the right precautions, everyone can enjoy the sun and outdoors more safely. If you are having any problems after being in the sun, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider.



### UV-A & UV-B—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The sun emits radiation known as UV-A and UV-B rays. Both types can damage your eyes and skin:

- » UV-B rays have short wavelengths that reach the outer layer of your skin
- » UV-A rays have longer wavelengths that can penetrate the middle layer of your skin

The background of the slide is a photograph of tall, thin grass stalks with seed heads, silhouetted against a warm, golden sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect and a soft glow across the scene.

Believe you can and  
**you're halfway there.**

Theodore Roosevelt

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