

THAT'S WHAT FRIEND IS FOR Resolutions To Improve Our Families Health

As we approach the end of January, we may be reflecting on the promises and resolutions we had made for the New Year. Improving one's health was a popular promise that many of us made to ourselves. One of the top choices of self-made promises included weight monitoring with food intake and exercise components viewed at the forefront. These two concepts are on every list developed as a "self-help" to health. Each group in the food pyramid has a purpose to keep our body in a healthy balance. Many adults (let alone children) need guidance in this area when it comes to types of carbohydrates that are best for us, portion control, and the like. The latest pyramid includes the importance of daily physical activity right in the diagram. To learn more together with your children see www.MyPyramid.gov. Involving your children in meal planning, shopping, and meal preparation helps to reinforce the lessons learned...why not discuss **tomorrow's** menu while walking in the park as a family?

Remaining healthy in these winter months also has other prevention components. Hand hygiene is known to be an important step to prevent infections including the common cold. A **ten**-second wash of the whole hand with soap and warm water can reduce the number of germs that we invisibly collect from public surfaces like doorknobs, telephones, and computer keyboards while we perform our daily activities. Added cleanliness through good personal hygiene and home hygiene helps to fight even more disease-causing germs! Plenty of rest, physical activity, fluids, **and** nutritious food **as well as** managing stress all help to strengthen the immune system **thus** rounding out the plan for health.

However, what is important to keep the "healthy" momentum directed toward the future is to develop a feeling of self-worth in each child and open their world to the vast resources of information that are available to them to be a lifelong learner. In this day and age, it does take a "village" to help raise individuals that feel good, are ready to learn and are willing to take care of themselves. Parents and grandparents are busily balancing childcare and work. Schools are busily balancing childcare **while trying to meet constantly** changing standards. It takes a team effort to produce an individual that feels loved, confident and ready to take charge positively in the community where they reside. Repetition of the information from supportive adults in a child's life helps to reinforce the information and its importance. Some resources to help your family in the journey to healthy living include:

www.MyPyramid.gov

www.health.gov/healthypeople

www.healthfinder.gov

www.cdc.gov

www.lvh.org/healthyyou

www.cancer.org

www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=FL00058 (see Kid Scoop links)

www.americanheart.org

www.tobaccofreekids.org

This article was brought to you by Sandy Meldrum, school nurse at Topton and Longswamp Elementary Schools in Brandywine School District. In order to find out about additional ways to strengthen our families, Friend Inc. Community Services offers two parenting programs, Parenting the 5-to12 Year Old, and Parents of Teens. To inquire about these groups or learn about other services at Friend Inc. such as money management mentoring, case management or food pantry, call 610-683-7790 or visit www.friendinc.org.

Have fun on your journey to good health!