



# Healthy Kids

From our family to yours

A publication of California Pacific Medical Center

Spring 2006

## Not All Calories Are Created Equal

The ones in nutrient-rich foods are best ■ An interview with Trudy Theiss, M.S., R.D., CDE

It's a basic truth: If you consume more calories than you burn, you gain weight. But what, exactly, is a calorie? And are there any differences among calories from different food sources?



"Calories represent the energy-producing potential in food," says California Pacific Medical Center Registered Dietitian Trudy Theiss, M.S., R.D., CDE. "The energy released when your body metabolizes food fuels the growth and maintenance of body tissues, the conduction of electrical nerve impulses, the work of muscles during physical activity and the heat production necessary to maintain body temperature. If you take in more calories than required for those body functions, your body stores the excess as fat."

### Cutting down on sugar

Theiss notes that some calories are "better" than others. "Better calories" come from nutrient-rich foods that contain lots of vitamins and minerals. "In today's diets, sugar, which is not a nutrient-rich food, can make up a large part of the daily calorie intake," says Theiss.

To cut down on sugar in children's diets, Theiss suggests limiting fruit juices, since they can contain as much sugar as sodas. "Fresh fruit is always a better choice than juice because you get fewer calories, plus more fiber and other nutrients," she explains.

### Fat in your child's diet

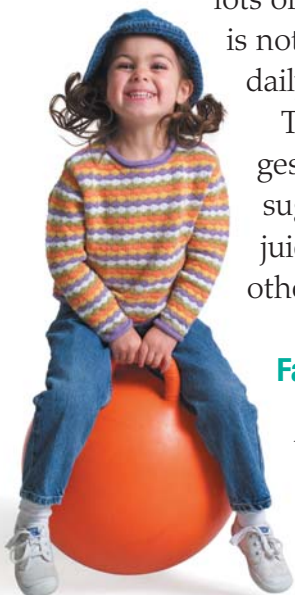
In addition to monitoring sugar intake, parents should be concerned about the number of calories from fats. "Fats are a necessary nutrient, but excess fat calories are quickly converted into body fat," Theiss says.

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# Combating Childhood Obesity

A Special Focus for *HealthyKids* ■ by David Tejada, M.D., chair, Department of Pediatrics, and Oded Herbsman, M.D., medical director, Pediatric Inpatient Services

Obesity, a growing epidemic among children, is poised to pass tobacco as America's leading preventable killer. For children, the health risks associated with obesity are serious. At California

Pacific, we are seeing an increase in many health issues related to obesity, namely, a rise in childhood diabetes, sleep apnea, orthopedic problems and psychiatric issues. The obesity epidemic is particularly disturbing because overweight children often become obese adults, with problems such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.

To combat the obesity epidemic locally, California Pacific pediatricians are establishing a pediatric obesity

program that will be unveiled later in 2006. This effort will target at-risk communities within San Francisco, providing them with convenient clinic locations, community programs, and diet and exercise classes. We will share more news about this program in a future issue.

We hope this issue of *HealthyKids* gives you some needed information and tools to keep your family's health in check! Please let us know of any pediatric health questions (see our "Doctor Is In" column below), newsletter feedback or topic suggestions. Our editorial contact information is provided at the back of this magazine. We look forward to hearing from you! ★



California Pacific pediatricians are establishing a pediatric obesity program that will be unveiled later in 2006.

## The Doctor Is In

Your child's health questions answered ■ by David Tejada, M.D., chair, Department of Pediatrics

**Q:** My son's verbal skills are the least developed in his preschool class. I'm not sure if it's because he is the youngest in the class, or the fact that he's exposed to both English and Chinese at home. When should I be concerned about his language development and how do I pursue an assessment?

**A:** It is important to discuss your concerns with your child's pediatrician. All children should routinely have developmental assessments, which typically occur at well-child visits. Use these visits to discuss any issues relevant to your child's age. There is a wide range of normal language development. Your pediatrician will help determine if your son's speech is delayed. If so, referral for a hearing test or further evaluation may be warranted. Learning two languages at the same time may be a factor in mild,

transient delay in language development. However, it does not cause significant language delay. Reading to your child daily has a positive impact on language development. ★



Reading to your child daily has a positive impact on language development.

### Submit Your Question

If you have a child's health question that you want addressed in a future issue of *HealthyKids*, e-mail it to us at: [bosquejp@sutterhealth.org](mailto:bosquejp@sutterhealth.org), or visit [www.cpmc.org/pediatrics](http://www.cpmc.org/pediatrics). Due to space limitations, we cannot guarantee that all questions will be answered.

# Exercise for the Mind and Spirit, As Well As Body



**Yoga and tai chi offer exercise, relaxation** ■ by Jennifer Cohen, M.D., pediatric hospitalist

As yoga and tai chi gain popularity among adults for pain management and injury prevention, many parents wonder if these activities are also appropriate for children.

Yoga, which originated in India, engages participants in a series of postures that promote strength, balance, flexibility and relaxation. Its regular use has been reported to improve attention deficit disorder (ADD) and asthma, as well as migraines and other pain problems. Although very little research has been done on its health benefits for children, yoga is generally a safe activity that, at the very least, will help with relaxation and stress reduction.



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## Finding a child's yoga class

Some adult yoga studios offer classes specifically for kids, while others cater exclusively to children and may include activities such as dance or art classes. Children as young as 3 may be interested in yoga; many of the postures are named for animals that children like to imitate.

Before registering your child, ask to observe a class. Classes for smaller children may be geared toward having fun, while those for older kids and teens may be quieter and more relaxing. A good teacher can engage children of all ages. He or she will encourage correct positioning and offer alternatives for children who are less flexible. Children should be taught and reminded to respect and tune in to any pain they may feel. The lessons in body awareness, as well as strength, balance and flexibility, will help children with other activities as well.

## Tai chi for children

Tai chi, also known as "meditation in motion," is an ancient form of Chinese meditation that uses a series of slow movements, with controlled breath, to



quiet the mind, relax the body and improve balance. In Chinese medicine, tai chi is recommended to balance the body's organ systems and restore health. Health benefits are well-documented in adults, but again, little research has been done in children. Classes for children will generally be found at martial arts studios. Look for teachers who instruct without criticizing and encourage a noncompetitive atmosphere.

Yoga and tai chi are generally safe for healthy children — including those with special needs — but, as with any exercise program, consult your pediatrician before registering your child in a class. While the research into these exercises for children is minimal, both clearly have advantages in being noncompetitive and helping to establish physical activity and mental wellness habits that can last a lifetime. ★

**Yoga engages participants in a series of postures that promote strength, balance, flexibility and relaxation.**



# Confronting African American Health

Putting kids' needs first ■ An interview with Nadine Burke, M.D., MPH

Across the United States, the infant mortality rate among African Americans is more than double the rate among the general population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In San Francisco, the infant mortality rate for African Americans is four times the rate of the city's general population.

To confront this astonishing disparity and other instances of inadequate health care coverage for San Francisco's African American community, California Pacific Medical Center joined forces three years ago with all hospitals in the city to form the African American Health Disparity Project (AAHDP).

"Many African Americans in San Francisco live in communities that have been marginalized," says Nadine Burke, M.D., MPH, a California Pacific pediatrician with a master's degree in public health. "San Francisco's health care providers have historically not done a

good job addressing the disparities in health care delivery for the African American community. For example, the rate of asthma hospitalization for children living in the Bayview district is roughly six to seven times that of children living in the Marina. One of our goals is to dramatically reduce the number of preventable hospitalizations."

Dr. Burke joined California Pacific as a direct result of the hospital's involvement in the AAHDP. "This type of work is my dream — to create programs that help ensure all San Francisco children have the opportunity to grow up healthy,



Dr. Burke joined California Pacific as a direct result of the hospital's involvement in the African American Health Disparity Project.

regardless of the neighborhood in which they live."

One of Dr. Burke's dream programs is about to become a reality when California Pacific opens the Bayview Child Health Center at the Arthur H. Coleman Medical Center on 3rd Street. This center will offer such medical

## Get Your Kids to Log Off

"Screen time" cuts into physical pastimes

Television and video games have deprived children of outside play for years. Now that most homes have a personal computer and about a third of kids ages 8 to 18 have one in their room, health experts have raised concerns about safety and inactivity.

Going "online" can expose youngsters to predators or cause them to waste hours in chat rooms. In addition, rising "screen time" can cost kids the exercise they need to keep fit.

"Activity levels are waning, due to changes in [school] curricula, computer technology and community resources," says Carl Foster, Ph.D., president of the American College of Sports Medicine. "As a result, our kids are getting fatter and may be the first generation not to have a longer life expectancy than their parents."

Children and teens should get at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity, according to the 2005 dietary guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services.

### How can you help?

A lot of doctors say you should take TVs and PCs out of kids' rooms and limit screen time to less than two hours a day. They also say you should encourage more exercise. This is a terrific opportunity to spend quality time



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with your children by walking with your kids a few nights a week after supper, for instance. Consider shutting off the weekend cartoons to do a family activity like bike riding, hiking or swimming.

"While your children may complain in the short term, they will be healthier and better developed people for having a little less electronic input," says Dr. Foster, a professor of sports science at

# Disparities



services as vaccinations, well-child exams and urgent-care visits, along with follow-up and continuous care for long-term health problems. Families can also get referrals to medical specialists for problems ranging from diabetes to asthma. To contact the Bayview Child Health Center, call 415-600-2460.

“We want to ensure that children get the specialized care they need so that they don’t end up in the emergency room,” notes Dr. Burke, who will staff the facility along with other California Pacific health care professionals.

The Center will accept all forms of insurance and help families enroll in various city, state and federal medical coverage programs. “Children in San Francisco are universally insured through programs such as Healthy Kids,” Dr. Burke explains. “Parents often aren’t aware of the resources available to them. We are committed to helping families protect the health of their children.” ★



**Nadine Burke, M.D., MPH, pediatrician, California Pacific Medical Center**

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Children and teens should get at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity.

**Dietary guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services**

## To Learn More

- ▶ “We Can!” (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute): <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>
- ▶ PC-Turnoff Organization: [www.pcturnoff.org](http://www.pcturnoff.org)
- ▶ American College of Sports Medicine: [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)
- ▶ National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity: [www.ncppa.org](http://www.ncppa.org)
- ▶ President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)

the University of Wisconsin–LaCrosse.

“The key is to create something else for them to do outside without being overbearing about it or orchestrating the play. You may need to band together with other parents and organize an after-school program to provide a safe venue. But kids, being kids, are plenty smart enough to think up fun things to do.” ★

## Not All Calories *continued from page 1*

Parents should be selective about the type of fats their children consume, and limit saturated and trans-fats as much as possible. Remember, the lower the fat content, the bigger portion you get for the same number of calories.”

Consumption of calorie-dense foods and lack of adequate exercise are directly related to the increasing rate of obesity among children and teens in the United States, Theiss notes. Monitoring your children’s diets to make sure they aren’t taking in too many calories and encouraging children to get plenty of exercise are key to preventing childhood obesity. ★



**Trudy Theiss, M.S., R.D., CDE**

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In today’s diets, sugar, which is not a nutrient-rich food, can make up a large part of the daily calorie intake.

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## Tips for Staying Healthy

To help develop healthy eating patterns in children, Theiss offers several recommendations:

- ▶ Be aware of what your children are eating at home and school.
- ▶ Limit consumption of sodas and processed or “fast” foods.
- ▶ Offer healthy choices of foods with low calorie density, and allow children to decide how much or whether to eat.
- ▶ Never force a child to “clean your plate.”
- ▶ Limit fat consumption to about 30 percent of total caloric intake.
- ▶ Avoid being overly restrictive about which foods children eat — the sense that some foods are “forbidden” may lead to unhealthy eating behaviors.
- ▶ Encourage children to eat foods that are high in water and fiber content, both of which help make them feel full longer.
- ▶ Try to have relaxed family meals and encourage children to eat more slowly and recognize when they are full.
- ▶ Make sure your children get plenty of exercise.

For more guidance in developing a healthy diet for your children, Theiss suggests consulting the Web site for the USDA’s food pyramid, [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov), or an authoritative book such as *Child of Mine*, by registered dietitian and social worker Elyn Satter. “If, in spite of your best efforts, you notice your child is gaining too much weight, be sure to consult your pediatrician,” she adds.

# Mending Hearts Is Strength of California Pacific Team

The Pinto family's story ■ by Laura Miyashita

After having a healthy second pregnancy and delivering a beautiful baby boy one year ago, San Francisco residents Sarah and John Pinto couldn't have been happier. "My delivery was a piece of cake and our son, Charlie, was perfect," remembers Sarah. Within hours, though, Charlie's life was at risk.

"Charlie was in the Well-Baby Nursery when we were informed that he looked blue," Sarah remembers. "They took him to the NICU for tests, where doctors determined he had a closed valve in his heart. Charlie was given a drug called prostaglandin to keep open a communication between his pulmonary artery and aorta. Without that drug, no blood could get into the lungs, and the oxygen level in his circulatory system could not sustain life."



California Pacific Medical Center Pediatric Cardiologist Nikola Tede, M.D. was one of the physicians who immediately attended to Charlie in the NICU. "Charlie had a murmur that sounded louder than the normal transitional murmur of a newborn," recalls Dr. Tede. "After performing an echocardiogram [cardiac ultrasound], we quickly confirmed Charlie had pulmonary atresia with an intact septum."

## Heart disease prevalent in newborns

"Most people don't realize how prevalent heart disease is in newborns," Dr. Tede continues. "Up to 1 percent of all babies will have some form of congenital heart defect, and most of these problems become apparent very shortly after birth."

Shortly after his diagnosis, two-day-old Charlie Pinto underwent surgery with Michael Black, M.D., chief of California Pacific's Division of Pediatric Heart Surgery. "A newborn baby's heart is so incredibly tiny that we have to use



Charlie Pinto with mom Sarah (right) and Pediatric Cardiologist Nikola Tede, M.D., nearly one year following his heart surgery.

the most minimally invasive procedures possible," notes Dr. Black.

During Charlie's surgery, Dr. Black used exceptionally small incisions and microscopic cameras to magnify and illuminate the area surrounding Charlie's heart. Then, Dr. Black used Charlie's own tissue to create a new valve. Because of Charlie's young age, a portion of his initial defect was left to promote growth. After his heart developed further, Dr. Black used the same incisions nine months later to completely close the hole in Charlie's heart, leaving him with normal circulation.

## Minimally invasive surgery used for heart repairs

"Every child's condition is different," Dr. Black continues. "Because we have such a highly skilled cardiac team, as well as the most leading-edge technologies available, we are able to think creatively to develop unique strategies that exceed treatment expectations."

Charlie's parents are extremely happy with the care Charlie received at California Pacific. "We never thought of our situation as a tragedy," says John. "Drs. Tede and Black were very positive about our options and were so willing to talk to us at length." Sarah agrees, "There's always hope, and the medical advancements now are amazing." Even better, though, is Charlie's recovery. Now 1 year old, Charlie is a charming little boy who is developing well and keeping his parents busy chasing after him! ★



Michael Black, M.D., chief, Division of Pediatric Heart Surgery

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Because we have such a highly skilled cardiac team, we are able to think creatively.

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### For more information

California Pacific Medical Center is a regional leader in pediatric cardiovascular care. To find out more about our pediatric services, visit our Web site at [www.cpmc.org/pediatrics](http://www.cpmc.org/pediatrics) or call our Specialty Referral Line at 888-637-2762.



# Healthy Family Recipes



Good habits begin early ■ An interview with Sharon Meyer, CNC

Getting children to eat a healthy diet with a good balance of nutrients isn't always easy. There is hope, however, for every parent who has had to contend with a picky eater who refuses to touch those "icky" green beans.

"Introducing children to a wide variety of foods at an early age helps develop healthy eating habits that will continue through the years," says Sharon Meyer, CNC, a certified nutritionist at California Pacific Medical Center's Institute for Health & Healing. "One way to do that is to involve your kids in cooking. They will be proud of the dishes they create and excited to eat them. It also enables you to educate your children as to where various foods come from and what constitutes a healthy meal."

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**Sharon Meyer, CNC,**  
certified nutritionist,  
California Pacific  
Medical Center  
Institute for Health  
& Healing

For children, a healthy diet encompasses more than just three meals a day. "It's better for children to eat smaller meals, with healthy snacks between meals," Meyer says.

Children also require plenty of calcium, but it doesn't have to come from milk. "Studies have shown that absorption of the calcium in cow's milk is inferior to that of calcium from plant sources," Meyer notes. She recommends leafy green vegetables, cooked beans and peas, nuts, seeds and whole grains,



Involving your kids in cooking enables you to educate your children as to where various foods come from and what constitutes a healthy meal.

in addition to dairy sources of calcium.

Meyer offers the following snack ideas and a recipe to help ensure a healthy diet.

## Snack ideas:

- ▶ **Trail mix:** pecans, walnuts, almonds, cashews, soy nuts, raisins, dried cranberries. *Note: Avoid giving nuts and raisins to toddlers under 2, and supervise older toddlers when they eat these foods, as they can present a choking hazard.*
- ▶ **Plain yogurt** with 1 teaspoon honey and fresh or thawed frozen fruit (if not lactose intolerant). *Note: Do not give honey to children under age 1.*
- ▶ **String cheese**
- ▶ **Hummus with carrots, steamed broccoli, red peppers or jicama**
- ▶ **Sweet potato chips:**
  - Slice sweet potatoes thinly.
  - Lay on a baking sheet; sprinkle with olive oil, salt and pepper.
  - Bake at 375 degrees until crisp.
  - Serve plain or with hummus or guacamole.
- ▶ **Fruit** ★

## Tuna or Salmon Salad Wraps

- 1 can tuna or salmon
- ¼ cup minced green onions
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ tbsp. Dijon mustard
- salt and pepper
- 2 whole-wheat tortillas



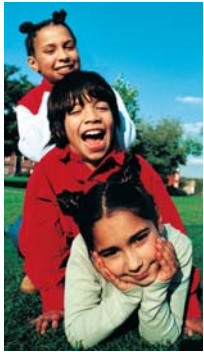
Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Spoon the mixture onto the tortillas and wrap.

## To Learn More

Visit [www.cpmc.org/pediatrics](http://www.cpmc.org/pediatrics) for more nutritious recipes.

# Child-Focused Hospitals Lead Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Efforts

Most parents don't want to hurt their children intentionally. But the stress of an infant who won't stop crying or the daily struggles of caring for a child with special needs can overwhelm even the most loving parents. Whether you are struggling to build positive discipline skills or have seen another parent or caretaker abuse a child but don't know what to do, your children's medical provider can help.



Nearly 3 million cases of suspected abuse and neglect are reported in the United States each year. The National Association for Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI) and its members, such as California Pacific Medical Center, are leaders in providing medical care to abused and neglected children. They teach coping skills to deal with the frustration and anger that every parent feels at one time or another while child-rearing. Hospitals dedicated to the care of children and their families also provide parenting classes, fact sheets,

support groups and other resources to guide parents through the stresses of raising children.

Worried that a child you know or see in a public place is being maltreated? Child-focused hospitals and medical providers can help connect you to an appropriate community resource where you can anonymously report your concerns.

Some parents worry that if their children are injured accidentally, not through abuse, they will be suspected of child abuse if they bring them to a hospital. That's why child-focused hospitals are working together to weave a seamless, timely and effective system of abuse response that helps protect innocent parents and provides necessary medical care and emotional healing to the nation's most vulnerable children.

Working with hospital leaders, pediatricians and allied organizations, NACHRI developed a guide to the establishment, development and enhancement of child abuse services within child-focused hospitals. These guidelines are helping the community of child-focused hospitals provide the highest level of quality care possible to abused and neglected children. ★

## To Learn More

California Pacific Medical Center is an associate member of NACHRI. For more information on this organization and its efforts to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect, visit [www.childrenshospitals.net](http://www.childrenshospitals.net) and select "Child Advocacy." California Pacific Medical Center offers a Postpartum Depression Support Group through Newborn Connections. Call 415-600-BABY for details. To view other resources, visit [www.cpmc.org](http://www.cpmc.org) or ask your child's health care provider.



**NACHRI**  
National Association of Children's  
Hospitals and Related Institutions  
[www.childrenshospitals.net](http://www.childrenshospitals.net)

[www.cpmc.org](http://www.cpmc.org)

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