98point6

WINTER 2021 EDITION

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David McCune, MD, MPH

HealthCh@t: Antibiotics usage in pediatric population

PATIENT QUESTION:

My child can't return to daycare unless he recovers from bronchitis, but the pediatrician won't prescribe antibiotics. How do we treat it?

PHYSICIAN ANSWER:

The short answer is that bronchitis is a disease that resolves on its own in most cases; therefore, in this instance, antibiotics do more harm than good, leading to avoidable side effects and contributing to widespread antibiotic resistance, which has become a global health threat.

The more complicated answer is that bronchitis is typically a viral infection, and antibiotics target bacteria, not viruses. Just as important is that antibiotics can end up killing bacteria in our bodies that are essential for our health. This may be particularly true in children, where the early use of antibiotics has been associated with a host of future health issues, like asthma, allergies and childhood obesity.

Antibiotics still play an important, even life-saving, role in treating infection, but many times the right choice is avoiding them. That doesn't mean you and your pediatrician are powerless. Ask about medications and other treatments that can reduce the symptoms of bronchitis while your child's body fights the virus. And one nice thing about a virtual 98point6 visit compared to in-person is that it is much more convenient to start a Follow-Up Visit in a few days if the symptoms are not resolving.

One study[1] of 19 million U.S. patients found that 51.8% of all antibiotic prescriptions were "inappropriate" or "potentially inappropriate" (i.e., deemed medically unnecessary).

Learn more about the correct and responsible use of antibiotics, and how 98point6 is committed to keeping medicine effective.

Why Fitness in the COVID-19 Era Matters More Than Ever (and How You Can Keep Moving Safely)

Post-COVID-19, gym memberships and attendance may not be skyrocketing like they usually do in the season of New Year's resolutions, but that self-improvement mindset should definitely persist, since **regular physical activity boosts overall health, immunity and general quality of life.** And applied to the era of COVID-19, maintaining a healthy body and mind are just one more way, as individuals, we can potentially fight the virus.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), exercise helps reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease that, in turn, increase the likelihood of COVID-19 complications. One study[1] even suggests that regular exercise may decrease risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome, a major cause of death in COVID-19 patients.

So does the benefit of hitting the gym this winter outweigh the pandemic-associated risks? Not exactly. "There aren't many people who miss gyms more than I do, but the hard truth is that they're a challenging environment to keep safe," says Dr. McCune. "Your fellow patrons may be a bit more than six feet away, but if they're panting on a treadmill or squeezing out one last rep, they're probably also expelling a greater than normal amount of respiratory droplets into the air."

Due to winter surges in COVID-19 cases, some gyms have limited their hours of operation, or closed temporarily. If the level of virus spread is currently high in your local area, steering clear is in your best interest. Dr. McCune recommends getting outside for a run, bike ride or brisk walk when the weather permits, and mastering bodyweight exercises like squats, lunges, burpees and sit-ups that can be done indoors—or anywhere—with no equipment.

HERE ARE SOME BASIC SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING OUT AT HOME:

Walk, jog or bike 150 minutes or more per week.
Go at a pace where you can talk but it is not easy.

Do exercises for your arms and legs 2-3 days per week.
Shoot for 8-20 repetitions and 3 sets. If it gets too easy, add some weight to a backpack.

Upper body push exercises: push ups or overhead lifts with dumbbells or resistance bands

Upper body pull exercises: Chin ups or pull ups on a bar and/or pulling exercises with resistance bands

Lower body: body weight squats and forward/backward/sideways lunges. Add hand weights if it gets easy.

Possible equipment: chin up bar, resistance bands, hand weights

Tip: there are a lot of great (and free) videos on YouTube that describe the proper way to do common exercises.

Obesity Cheat Sheet

BY THE NUMBERS | TAKING ACTION | TALK TO A PHYSICIAN

Epidemic proportions
For decades, the average weight of Americans has increased. A recent study[2] found that 42.4% of U.S. adults are now obese, as well as 19.3% of children. This is the single biggest preventable health crisis in the country.

What's my BMI?
BMI, or "body mass index" is calculated using your height and weight. It is a simple tool that helps doctors assess your risk for obesity-related disease. Over 25 is considered overweight and over 30 obese.

How many calories do I need per day?
Workouts aside, if we take in more calories than we burn with activity, our bodies store the excess as fat. Use this body weight planner to get a daily calorie target for your weight goal. Learn how to count the calories in the foods you are eating. It may be more than you need.

How much physical activity should I get daily?
Kids should get a minimum of 60 minutes per day of active play or sports.

Adults should get a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, like a brisk walk, plus at least two sessions devoted to muscle strengthening.

Make 2021 the Year of No Excuses

We all have our reasons for putting off that visit to the doctor. There's no time in your schedule. It's too awkward to talk about. And 2020 gave us a perfectly valid new excuse: worries about potential COVID-19 exposure.

The result? **A widespread decrease in annual wellness and chronic illness checks, routine lab work and recommended cancer screenings.** In fact, 61% of clinicians reported being worried about avoidable illness among patients due to delayed care.[4]

Why Primary Care Matters
How important is that annual check-up with your primary care doctor? Well, numerous studies have confirmed a life-affirming truth: having a primary care doctor keeps people healthier as they age. As far as regular screenings like mammograms and colonoscopies, the guidelines are complicated, and it's the primary care doctor's role to guide you toward the best individualized recommendation.

We're Here for You
While 98point6 isn't meant to replace your regular physician or your yearly in-person visit, it's different from traditional telemedicine or urgent care in that the primary care relationship is core to our mission.

Our physicians are available on-demand, 24/7 whether you're feeling sick right now or you're looking for answers and guidance on the next step in your healthcare journey. By empowering you to better understand the importance of primary care, we believe we can help you take charge of your health.

Excuses Are So 2020
With 98point6 text-based primary care, concerns about COVID-19 transmission from an in-person visit don't prevent you from getting the most out of a relationship with primary care. Here are just a few questions we can help address, from wherever you are:

- Do I need screening for high blood pressure?
- Should I be screened for diabetes?
- Am I due for a mammogram?
- Is it time to check my cholesterol?
- Are my vaccinations up-to-date?

[1] Chua Kao-Ping, Fischer Michael A, Linder Jeffrey A.
Appropriateness of outpatient antibiotic prescribing among privately insured US patients: ICD-10-CM based cross sectional study
BMJ 2019; 364:k5092
[2] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2213231720302190
[3] Results from surveys conducted by green-center.org in partnership with pcpoc.org and 3rdconversation.org |
green-center.org/covid-survey

OTHER Q&A TOPICS

The scoop on supplements

Q: It seems like half the people I work with are on some kind of trendy diet or another. Some involve taking lots of supplements with meals, others revolve around costly powders and shakes. What should I be on the lookout for in terms of safety?

Find out more ›

Headache red flags

Q: Having a headache can put a stop to my day. At what point should I be concerned that there is a larger underlying issue?

Find out more ›

First steps to health change

Q: I've resolved to live healthier in 2020 but I have a long way to go and don't know where to start. What are the most important first steps? How do I set myself up for success in a way that fits my lifestyle and job?

Find out more ›

Something health-related keeping you up at night?

Whether your child has a high fever or you're worried about that dizziness you've been feeling, 98point6 is available 24/7 to you and your eligible family members aged 1 and older. With access to on-demand primary care via a mobile app, care is always at your fingertips.

Enter your mobile number below and we'll send a 98point6 app link right to your phone.

(555) 555-5555 Send ›