

# HealthWatch

## An Update on your Child's Health and Welfare

### The Power of Hope

With 2020 over, there is much to be grateful for and to hope for in this new year. Many believe that hope is a naïve characteristic that, when relied upon, only leads to disappointment. However, there are more benefits to having hope than meets the eye. According to Dr. Synder, a psychologist and researcher at the University of Kansas, hope is comprised of three essential things: goals, agency, and pathways. Agency refers to the belief in our own capabilities to achieve our goals, and pathways refer to the steps we are going to take to achieve our goals. Hope, in actuality, is much more proactive than many may realize. It is also beneficial for our overall health, well-being, and happiness.

According to Psychology Today, researchers have found that those who report having hope also report feeling happier, demonstrate higher academic performance and achievement, have increased sense of self and capabilities, and report fewer incidences of morbidity. Furthermore, those that have hope find that life has more meaning. What is more, hope can be learned, practiced, and strengthened!

Shane Lopez, a psychologist and hope-researcher, states that cultivating hope consists of three steps.

The first step is called future-casting, where you visualize your desired goal or outcome. Practicing future casting may look like a vision board where you make a collage of pictures and quotes that support your goal, or visualization where you create a mental picture of yourself achieving your goal.

The second step is putting in the work. This is where you may take extra classes or create work-out plans.

The third step is making multiple plans. Having hope is also pragmatic in the sense that achieving your desired goal may not happen exactly how you plan. Having a Plan A, Plan B, and even a Plan C is realistic and helps strengthen your agency. Brené Brown, speaker, author, and researcher, supports this idea: "If we want to cultivate hopefulness, we have to be willing to be flexible and demonstrate perseverance. Not every goal will look and feel the same. Tolerance for disappointment, determination, and a belief in self are the heart of hope."

Additionally, Psychology Today recommends looking outside of yourself to increase feelings of hope. Below are some tips that you and your family can practice for a happy, hopeful New Year.

**Serve:** Service, whether in the form of volunteering at a local food bank, making care packages, or helping with trash clean-up, is a beautiful way to look outside of yourself, increase self-agency by having a purpose, and spread hope to others!

**Gratitude:** Being grateful for the people in your life and the things that make you happy is a way to focus on the good that is still happening in your life and around the world.

**Connect:** Connecting (safely) with friends, family, and neighbors, is another way to look outside of yourself and recognize that there are others experiencing difficulties, too—you are not alone!

—Amy Swiger, RN, Valley Children's Healthcare

### Don't Leave Your Child's Skin High and Dry this Winter

Winter is coming—and the changing weather calls for a change in skincare routine. While parents have many things to keep track of this season, it's important to be mindful of your child's skin care needs as well. Dry skin, the most common skin issue in the winter months, can be prevented if prepared for, and its effects mitigated when treated correctly. This is especially important for children with eczema, allergies, psoriasis, or other skin diseases in which there is already impairment of the skin barrier.

#### Dryness Exacerbated by Handwashing

As we are all washing our hands even more frequently than in past winters to prevent the spread of COVID-19, dry skin can be exacerbated by frequent handwashing and harsh winter weather changes including drops in temperature, humidity, and wind

levels. Dryness occurs when the skin barrier is impaired, preventing it from retaining enough moisture and becoming dehydrated. The skin protects itself by producing natural oils, but soaps remove these oils, making the skin drier. If left untreated, dry skin may become



Continued on page 17

## 26 Tuesday

### RIVER PARK FARMERS MARKET

Enjoy more than 300 varieties of fresh, local produce, a wide variety of freshly baked goods, spices, herbs, local honey, meats, plants, arts, and more. Social distancing guidelines will be posted. Please wear a face mask. 5-9 p.m. River Park Shopping Center, Fresno. 994-9292

## 27 Wednesday

### VINEYARD FARMERS MARKET

Shop for the finest quality, locally-grown produce direct from the grower. Dedicated to providing a healthy shopping experience for parents all year! Hand-washing stations are available, social distancing guidelines will be posted, and masks are required. 3-6 p.m. Blackstone and Shaw Avenues. 222-0182



Support the local community by shopping at a Farmer's Market this month. Make sure to wear a mask, stay socially-distanced, and follow any other posted safety recommendations.

## 30 Saturday

### OLD TOWN CLOVIS FARMERS MARKET

Families are invited to shop for local produce in the open-air market in Old Town Clovis from 9-11:30 a.m. Hand-washing stations are available and social distancing guidelines will be posted. Please wear a mask. Old Town Clovis, Pollasky between Fifth and Bullard, Clovis. 298-5774

### RIVER PARK FARMERS MARKET

Families can shop for a wide variety of local fruits, vegetables, and everything delicious under the sun. Enjoy food trucks, freshly baked breads and sweets, art, and so much more! Social distancing guidelines will be posted. Please wear a face mask. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. River Park Shopping Center, Fresno. 994-9292

### VINEYARD FARMERS MARKET

Shop for the finest quality, locally-grown produce direct from the grower. Dedicated to providing a healthy shopping experience for parents all year! Hand-washing stations are available, social distancing guidelines will be posted, and masks are required. 7 a.m.-12 p.m. Blackstone and Shaw Avenues. 222-0182

### VISALIA FARMERS MARKET

Enjoy a family-oriented farmers market experience from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. today. Hand-washing stations are available and social distancing guidelines will be posted. Pre-order online directly from farmers for pick-up! Behind Sears, Caldwell & Mooney, Visalia. 730-6021

## 31 Sunday

### FORT WASHINGTON FARMERS MARKET

Head to North Fresno for local produce, hot food, baked goods, and more. Social distancing guidelines will be posted. Please wear a face mask. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Riverview Shopping Center, N. Fort Washington Road at Friant Road, Fresno. 994-9292

HealthWatch continued from page 6

irritated and start flaking, itching, cracking, burning, or even bleeding, damaging the skin barrier and increasing the risk of infection.

### The Right Way to Moisturize

Regular moisturization will lock water into the skin and keep it hydrated, as well as restore the natural lipid barrier of the skin. The most important time to moisturize is immediately after bathing or handwashing (with lukewarm water) while the skin is still damp. This provides a seal to hold existing water in the skin. Hands should be moisturized as often as possible, and the body once or twice daily, even if not preceded by bathing. Generally, thick ointments are more effective than creams, and creams are more effective than lotions. Lotions that are thinner and usually come in a pump may contain fragrances and alcohols that can be drying or irritating, and may cause a burning sensation in dry or cracked skin. For children who may not like greasy, goopy products, a thick fragrance-free cream will work well and is typically well-tolerated.

### What to Avoid

Babies and young children have especially sensitive skin that is easily irritated, and extra steps are needed to protect their skin during the winter months. The main ingredients to avoid are fragrances, perfumes, and dyes, as they can cause additional dryness, irritation, and trigger allergies in some children. Scented products, for example, contain fragrance and may cause irritation. When selecting skincare products for children, "sensitive skin" and "fragrance free" are good labels to look out for.

### Don't Forget About the Lips

The cold air, the chilling dry wind, and heated air inside the mouth all conspire to make lips dry and tight. More often than not, we forget about protecting our lips, leaving them exposed to winter conditions. The lips have very thin skin and do not contain oil glands like other areas of the skin. They can dry out 10 times faster than the rest of the skin on your face. Try to discourage your child from licking their lips as putting saliva on the lips actually makes them dry out faster. Plus, the enzymes that are in saliva—which are meant to digest food—are very irritating to the lips. Take care to use a lip balm that is ointment-based. This will lock in moisture and help prevent and heal cracks and splits in the skin. Look for ointments that contain petrolatum, mineral oil, or glycerin, and avoid lip balms containing camphor, eucalyptus, and menthol. These ingredients may initially feel soothing, but actually dry and irritate lips.

The best thing that parents and kids can do to prevent dry skin is moisturizing daily, especially after bathing, and immediately after handwashing. Remember: the thicker and blander your moisturizer, the better. Let your moisturizer be boring, and your skin be amazing.

— Sara Dill, MD, Member of the Society for Pediatric Dermatology, Adult and Pediatric Dermatologist at Luminous Dermatology, part of West Dermatology, with offices in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, CA. Dr. Dill is board certified in both dermatology and pediatric dermatology.