

# Saint David's Health News

Volume 4, Issue 5, May/June 2008

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Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that it is almost June and the end of another school year. As the boys have come and gone in my office over the past nine months, I can't help but marvel at how they have grown and matured. The First Graders have become better communicators; the Third Graders carry an air of being "big boys" as they get ready to enter Upper School; and the Eighth Graders' excitement over the changes that lie ahead is almost palpable.

I would like to congratulate all the Saint David's parents for doing such an excellent job of raising healthy, caring, respectful boys. I am also grateful for your cooperation this past year; for your concern regarding your child's health and safety; and for the questions, comments, and suggestions you have offered. I sincerely appreciate the warm welcome and support I have received from all of you.

Have a fun-filled, healthy summer!  
Annie Haddad

## BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)  
[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)

Dr. Jay L. Hoecher, a pediatrician at Mayo Clinic, refers to a healthy self-esteem in children as the "cornerstone of emotional health." Self-esteem comes about with the combination of feeling capable and feeling loved. If your child feels good about himself, he is better equipped to face life's challenges and conflicts in a realistic, optimistic manner. He is comfortable interacting with others, knows his strengths and weaknesses, and will work independently to find a solution to his problems. He also will offer to help others in need.

Children who have low self-esteem, on the other hand, have a pessimistic view of themselves and are reluctant to try new things. They are overly self-critical, are easily frustrated, and often speak negatively about their abilities. Setbacks are viewed as being permanent and difficult to bear.

As parents we are aware that our children thrive on a feeling of being loved and appreciated for their uniqueness. Here are some tips for helping your child develop a healthy self-esteem:

- Heap on the praise frequently and honestly. Look for opportunities to acknowledge a job well done, a unique talent, a strong effort, or a demonstration of a positive character trait. Use phrases such as "I like the way you..." or "You are improving at..." on a daily basis.
- Be affectionate. Hug your child to show appreciation. Smiles, nods, and pats on the back go a long way.
- Teach your child to "own" and solve his problems. Answer questions and offer alternatives.
- Teach your child to have a more accurate perception of himself. Correct misconceptions about his performance, appearance, ability, and anything else that he is irrational about.
- Avoid ridiculing or shaming your child. Do not convey blame or negative judgments.
- Reward effort and completion rather than outcome.
- Show your child that you can laugh at yourself. It will teach your child to view the world with a sense of humor.
- Help your child become involved in constructive activities that require cooperation with others. Volunteer together on a project so that your child knows that you value the work and his participation in it.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. Listen and give positive, accurate feedback.
- Create a safe, nurturing home environment.
- Address any school and social issues that may have an effect on your child's self-esteem directly and without delay.
- Be a positive role model. Nurture your own self-esteem.

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## HEALTHY KIDS' CEREALS: AN OXYMORON?

[www.reuters.com/article/healthNews](http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews)

When parents have little time on hectic mornings to offer their children a healthy, well-balanced breakfast, they often reach for the cereal box, based on the claim that cereals meet more than half a child's daily requirements for vitamins and minerals. According to recent study done by Yale University and reported in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, however, children's cereals fail to live up to health claims touted by the food industry; in fact, cereals marketed especially for children are less nutritious than those marketed for adults, and have the worse nutritional quality.

The analysis of 161 brands of ready-to-eat breakfast cereal revealed the following:

- Just because a cereal is labeled "low fat" or "low sugar" it does not necessarily mean that it is low in calories.
- Although those cereals labeled "whole grain" did have more fiber, they had the same if not greater amounts of sugar, fat, and sodium as other brands.
- Children's cereal had more sodium, sugar, carbohydrate, and calories per gram than cereals marketed for adults, and less fiber and protein.
- Sugar accounted for more than one-third of the weight of children's cereals, on average, compared to less than one-quarter of the adult cereals.

## HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A "HEALTHY" CEREAL?

**When choosing cereals for your child look for ones that:**

- ✓ Contain less than 4 grams of sugar per serving.
- ✓ Contain at least 4 grams of fiber per serving
- ✓ Contain less than 200 calories per serving.
- ✓ Do not have sugar, molasses, brown sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and organic or evaporated cane juice, high on their ingredient list.
- ✓ Contain less than 3 grams of fat per serving.
- ✓ Do not contain dyes, artificial colors, hydrogenated oils, and chemical preservatives.

To guide you when choosing healthy cereals for your child, **WebMd** offers a "*Cereal Report Card*" that rates popular cereals based on their nutritional value. Ratings go from A+ for **Nabisco Shredded Wheat** and **Kellogg's All Bran Original** to F for **Kellogg's Frosted Flakes** and **Post Cocoa Pebbles**. Go to: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com).

## HEALTHY SNACKS

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

Parents often ask me for recommendations for healthy, kid-friendly snacks. Here are some suggestions from the **American Dietetic Association**:

--Microwave a small baked potato. Top with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.

--Put cubes of low-fat cheese and grapes on pretzel sticks.

--Top low-fat vanilla yogurt with crunchy granola and sprinkle with berries.

--Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.

--Spread celery sticks with low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins.

--Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit and top with low-fat vanilla yogurt.

--Make a mini-sandwich with tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll.

--Microwave a cup of tomato or vegetable soup and serve with whole grain crackers.

--Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced peaches.

--Peel a banana and dip it in yogurt. Roll in crushed cereal (a healthy one) and freeze.

--Mix together dried fruit, ready to-eat cereal in a sandwich bag for an on-the-go snack.

--Smear a scoop of frozen yogurt on two graham crackers and add sliced banana to make a sandwich.

--Sprinkle grated Monterey Jack cheese over a corn tortilla; fold in half and microwave for twenty seconds. Top with salsa.

--Make a smoothie by blending low-fat milk, frozen strawberries, and a banana for 30 seconds.