

# Earbuds: Small, But Powerful



## **Listening to music using earbuds allows you to relax and reduce stress.**

But it can also cause hearing loss, even at an early age.

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may be experiencing hearing damage:

- Are you hearing people's voices less clearly?
- Are you frequently asking people to repeat themselves?
- Does your family ask you to turn down the television because it is too loud, but you hear it at a normal level?
- Can others around you hear the music you are playing through your earbuds?

With a few simple changes to your listening habits, you can keep your ears healthy and lower your chances of hearing loss in the future.

**Switch to headphones.** Headphones help block out other noises, so you don't have to turn up the volume on your music as loud to hear it well. Compared to earbuds, headphones put the source of sound farther away from your inner ears.

**Listen at volumes lower than 85 decibels.** That's roughly the sound of city traffic heard from inside a car.

Anything higher can cause damage.

**Take a break.** If you have music playing in your ears for hours at a time, you're putting yourself at risk of permanently damaging your ears.

**Follow the 60/60 rule.** Never turn your volume past 60 percent and only listen to music with earbuds for a maximum of 60 minutes per day.

## Get Informed About **Meningitis**

Meningococcal meningitis is a very serious illness. It's very important that you know about the potential harm that can come from this disease. You need two vaccines to receive full protection. Here are a few things you can do to help prevent meningitis:

- Ask your primary care provider (PCP) if you have had both vaccinations.
- Do not share things that have been put in or around someone else's mouth. Things like toothbrushes, drinking glasses or eating utensils can spread the disease. Kissing can also spread the illness.
- Go to bed at a regular hour. Being rested can help improve your immune system.

### **Symptoms**

The symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck. Other symptoms might be:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Eyes are more sensitive to light
- Confusion

The symptoms of meningitis can appear quickly or over several days. But they usually develop within three to seven days after exposure.

### **Don't miss the occasion**

Take advantage of the many opportunities to get your meningococcal vaccines:

- Routine well visits
- Annual back-to-school checkups
- Pre-college checkups
- Visits for seasonal allergies
- Sick visits for minor illnesses
- Checkups before summer camp
- Sports physicals

### **Additional Resources**

Voices of Meningitis:

[www.voicesofmeningitis.org/questions-for-your-doctor.html](http://www.voicesofmeningitis.org/questions-for-your-doctor.html)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/symptoms.html](http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/symptoms.html)

## Have You Had Your Checkup?

You should get a TennCare Kids checkup every year. Getting a checkup is called preventive health care. Preventive health care or “wellness” means going to your health care provider – even when you are not sick. Part of taking care of yourself is getting your screening on time. Remember, if you are a United Healthcare Community Plan member under age 21, TennCare Kids checkups are at no cost to you. So call your Primary Care Provider today to schedule your appointment.

### CheckUp Check List

My next checkup is due \_\_\_\_\_.

Not sure when it is due?

Call your Primary Care Provider (PCP) and ask.

Not sure who your Primary Care Provider is?

To find out, call your health plan at  
**1-800-690-1606.**

Be prepared for your checkup.

Write down questions for your PCP.

One question I have for my PCP is:

\_\_\_\_\_

OR

Something my PCP needs to know about me is:

\_\_\_\_\_



## Are You Dealing with Abuse?

Abuse of children can take many forms. All forms of abuse are serious. It may be emotional, sexual, verbal or physical.

**There is nothing that you can do or say to deserve being abused. The abuse is never your fault.** Everyone has the right to a safe and healthy relationship.

To report suspected child abuse, call **1-877-237-0004**. If you are in immediate danger, call **911**. You do not have to have proof that abuse has occurred. Each concern will be reviewed on a personal basis.



Call 1-866-680-0633. In Nashville, call 1-615-248-0121. This service is free to all members younger than 21. If you are younger than 18, you can have a parent or guardian ride with you. Your parent or guardian needs to schedule the ride.

**Need a ride to your checkup?**



UnitedHealthcare Plan of the River Valley, Inc.

## THE VAPE DEBATE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



It's safe to say most teens know that smoking and other tobacco use is **dangerous**. But what about vaping?

Vaping tools use electricity to turn flavored liquid into vapor. These include vape pens, electronic cigarettes and hookah pens.

Vaping may seem fun and harmless. You've probably heard that vaping is safer than smoking. That's because it doesn't fill your lungs with harmful smoke. But many health professionals agree that vaping can be harmful to the body. Most vaping tools contain nicotine. It's highly addictive. When you stop using it, you can go into withdrawal and feel depressed and crabby. Over time, nicotine use can lead to serious health problems. Some include heart disease, blood clots and stomach ulcers.

**Because nicotine is so addictive, the best way to quit smoking or stop using vaping tools is never to start.**

If you smoke and want to quit, vaping probably isn't your best option. There's no proof that vaping is safe or successful at helping smokers quit. Talk to your primary care provider about medicines and other proven stop-smoking tools.

# Follow Up — Don't Fall Behind

**You feel healthy and you're up to date on vaccines.** So why not skip a routine exam? While it may not seem like a big deal, missing yearly well-teen checkups can lead to problems.

Your primary care provider (PCP) knows your health history, habits and personality. These checkups allow your PCP to notice changes in your health and catch small issues before they turn into big ones.

After your well-teen checkup, be sure to check back for:

**A follow-up appointment, if needed**

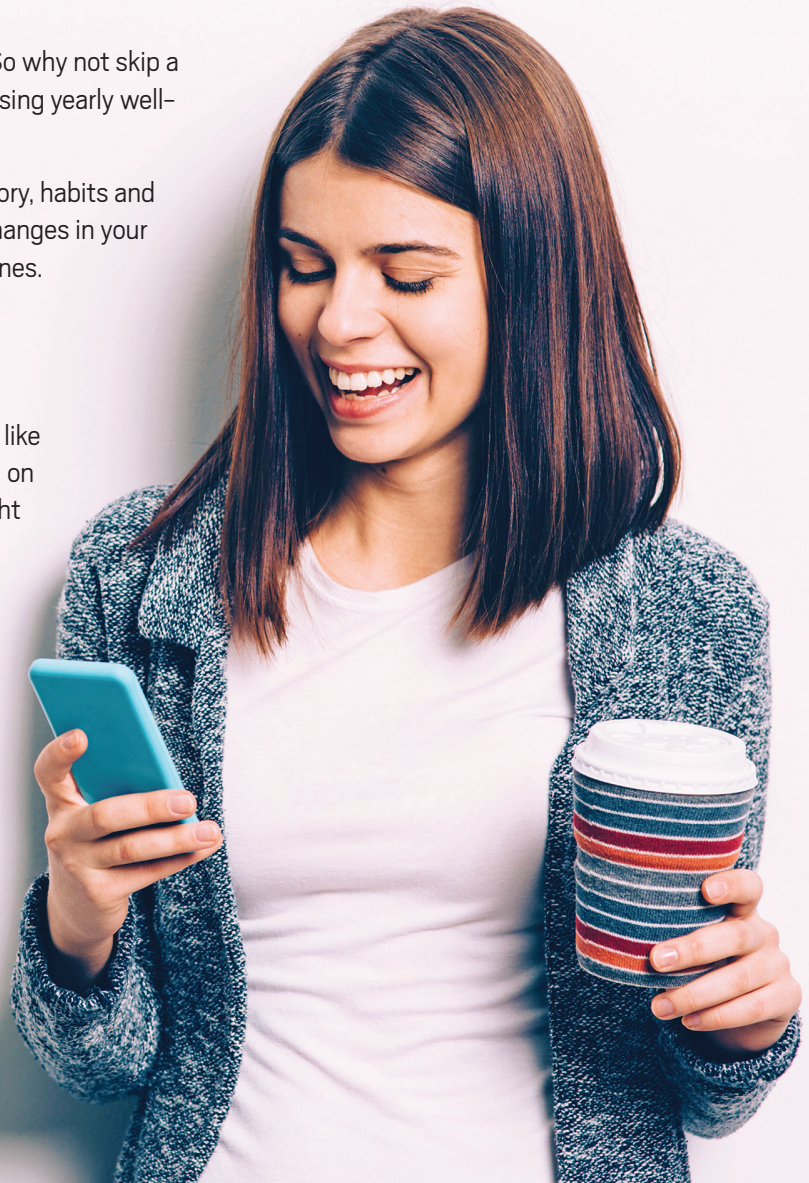
To be on the safe side, your PCP may order other exams, like screening for mood or behavioral health problems, based on your family history or other risk factors. Or your PCP might suggest that you get nutrition counseling.

**The next scheduled visit**

Your PCP may need to see you more often than once a year. Some conditions, such as asthma, ADHD and weight problems, mean you need regular and more frequent visits. These visits are important, too.

**Any new health problem that comes up**

Your PCP is just a phone call away. If you have questions or concerns, give your PCP a call! You don't have to wait until your next visit to check back in.



## Teen Mental Health

Being a teenager is hard. You're under stress to be liked, do well in school, get along with your family and make big decisions. These are typical teen pressures. Worrying about them is normal. But feeling very sad, hopeless or worthless could be warning signs of a mental health problem. Mental health problems are real, painful and sometimes severe. Mental health problems can be treated.

## Where to Find Help

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please seek help immediately.

- Talk to your parents or an adult you trust
- Call 911
- Visit a nearby emergency department or your health care provider's office
- Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

# Staying on Track for **Success at School**

**The best path for school success is to attend every day, in every grade.** Missing just one or two days a month adds up – and can have a serious, long-term impact. Make attendance a priority.

## **Here are a few tips to help you have great, year-round attendance:**

- Going to bed early and waking up on time every day can help you develop the habit of getting to school on time.
- If you must be absent, work with your teacher to make sure you have a chance to learn and make up any of the schoolwork you missed.
- Make sure you know how you are going to get to school every day. And think of a backup plan in case of emergency. A backup plan could be a ride from a neighbor or family friend who is available at that time.
- Stay healthy. It is important to get a regular checkup to make sure you are healthy. Don't forget to get a flu shot and wash your hands to stay healthy so you won't miss any days for illness.



- TennCare covers well-child checkups, dental care, immunizations, prescriptions, behavioral health services, vision and hearing screenings, and more. Talk to your parents or guardian and try to schedule primary care provider and dentist appointments outside of school hours.

## **ADHD Medicine Misuse, Sharing and Abuse**



**Medicines used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are safe and work well when used under a health care provider's care.** When taken without a prescription, or incorrectly, these drugs can be dangerous.

Teens sometimes abuse ADHD drugs to help them lose weight, focus or stay awake. Not taking your medicine exactly as your provider said you should can cause major health problems!

**You should never use someone else's prescription.** If you have a prescription for an ADHD drug, don't let a friend use it. If you do, you are putting both your friend and yourself at risk.

**Taking drugs without a prescription is a crime.** So is sharing your medicine with someone else. Pharmacists won't refill a prescription if you run out before the refill date shown on the bottle.

# SUGAR?

## Nah, You're Sweet Enough!



**Do you love sugary treats?** You're not alone, most people do! However, sugar has absolutely no nutritional value – no protein, vitamins, minerals or fiber.

Sometimes we expect lots of sugar to be in the food we eat, like candy, desserts and sodas. But sometimes the sugar we eat is hidden. Foods like ketchup, pasta sauces and crackers have large amounts of sugar. That's why it's important for you to read the food label on the package. Any word ending in "ose" is a sugar. Sucrose and fructose are sugars. Knowing what you are buying can help you cut down on the amount of sugar you eat.

Too much sugar causes problems like:

- **Tooth decay** – Rinse your mouth with water after eating something sugary. Don't forget to floss and brush your teeth well twice a day.
- **Obesity** – Too many sugary drinks is a factor that leads kids to becoming overweight.
- **Being overweight** increases the chance of getting diabetes.

To keep your body healthy, eat less than six teaspoons of "added sugars" a day. And keep those sodas to less than one a week and replace it with water. Fruit, vegetables and dairy foods contain their own natural sugars and they have lots of other good stuff as well. Lots of water and eating a balanced diet will help your body work better and give you a sweeter future!

### Additional Resources

Time for Kids: [www.timeforkids.com/news/danger-dessert/99091](http://www.timeforkids.com/news/danger-dessert/99091)

Women's and Children's Health Network: [http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sugar.html#kha\\_31](http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sugar.html#kha_31)

American Heart Association: <http://news.heart.org/kids-and-added-sugars-how-much-is-too-much>

## How to Keep Your Teeth Healthy and Bright!

There are a number of reasons your teeth may not look as white in color as they used to:

1. **Age** – the white shell of your teeth gets thinner as you get older and the yellow dentin shows through.
2. **Some drinks such as coffee and tea** stain teeth.
3. **Drinks high in acid** such as soda and sports drinks can thin the enamel.
4. **Tobacco** contains ingredients that can make teeth look yellow and stained.

Whitening toothpaste can help a little if your teeth are stained. The toothpaste bleaches and breaks the stains into smaller pieces. This makes your teeth look brighter. Be careful with the home remedies that may claim to whiten your teeth, since they may make your gum tissue darker, instead of making your teeth whiter. Overuse of whitening products can cause your teeth to be sensitive. So follow the directions on the label and talk to your dentist if you want your teeth to look whiter.

You can keep your smile looking great by having your dentist clean your teeth every six months, as well as brushing and flossing daily at home. If you need help finding a dentist, call DentaQuest at **1-855-418-1622**.