



Teen Talk

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Center for Young Women's Health



Children's Hospital Boston

Newsletter Coordination & Layout
Amanda Kohn, BFA

Editors
Phaedra Thomas, RN, BSN
S. Jean Emans, MD

Written by
The Youth Advisors

Center for Young Women's Health
Children's Hospital Boston
333 Longwood Avenue, 5th Fl.
Boston, MA 02115 | 617-355-2994
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CYBERBULLYING

— By Emily Gallagher

Cyberbullying recently received attention in the media after the tragic suicide of a teen from Massachusetts. In response, many schools held information sessions for students and their parents to address the problem with school officials.



Bullying has been a growing problem for decades, but with access to new technology, harassment now goes way beyond face-to-face insults. The abuse we normally associate with bullying has spread way beyond hallways and playgrounds into cyberspace. This is a serious danger, because hurtful material can reach many more people in cyberspace than it can in person. Anyone with a cell phone or a computer can now bully someone anonymously *and* behind closed doors. Cyberbullying is cruel to those who are victims, and can ruin friendships and cause lasting damage to a person's self-esteem.

If you are a victim of cyberbullying, you'll probably feel angry and have a desire to get even, but DON'T retaliate. If you do, you might say something about the other person that you'll regret later on. Remember; if you react on the same level, you're considered a cyberbully too. Instead of bullying back, save the messages and get off the site, out of the chat room, off the phone, (or wherever the remark was made) right away. Get the support of a close friend, and tell a parent, guardian, or other adult you trust about what happened.

In extreme cases (when serious threats have been made) it may be necessary for you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) to report the situation to your ISP (Internet Service Provider) and to the police.

If you are a victim of cyberbullying:

- **Don't bully back.** This is important, because if you retaliate, you become a bully yourself. Talk to a trusted adult (a parent, guardian, guidance counselor, older sibling) instead.
- **Ask for advice.** The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers advice to teens who have found themselves in a situation where they are being cyberbullied. They are available at the following website: netsmartz.org/contact/.

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Erica's Corner: Traveling Safely



Traveling is fun – you can meet new people and experience new cultures, but traveling may also expose you to diseases that your body may not be immune to. Therefore, when you've decided on your destination, talk with your healthcare provider and ask if you need to get any vaccines before you leave the country. The last thing you want is to be sick when you're far away from home!

Here are some things to remember to bring (in addition to your passport) when you are traveling:

- ★ **Bug spray or insect repellent:** Mosquitoes can carry diseases.
- ★ **Prescription medicine:** Be sure to bring enough of any prescription medicine you take both on a regular and as needed basis (*this includes asthma inhalers too*). Also, keep the medicine in the original prescription bottles.
- ★ **Over-the-counter medications** that you might need, such as acetaminophen, nasal spray, and anti-diarrhea medicine.
- ★ **Adhesive bandages** and an antiseptic spray or lotion.
- ★ **Sunscreen** and after-sun lotion (if you get a sunburn).

Although these items are available at pharmacies in the US, they may not be readily available in other countries. Also, since the tap water in some countries may be contaminated, it is good practice to drink bottled water and avoid ice cubes. You might consider using bottled water to brush your teeth for the same reason. Before you go on vacation, make sure you check out the Center for Disease and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov. You can look up your destination to find out if you will need special immunizations. You can also check out tips on how travel safely. ♥

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- **If it gets out of control**, contact your local law enforcement agency, and give them as much information as possible. Remember to save all internet/instant messaging conversations between you and the bully, and do not retaliate.
- **If you're the bully**, it's very important that you realize the damage you could be causing others. Take a second to ask yourself how you would feel if you were the one being bullied. Get help, and find another way to handle your anger.
- **If you're interested**, The Center for Young Women's Health offers presentations to tweens and teens between the ages of 12 to 18 on internet safety and cyberbullying.

For more information on cyberbullying, you can read our guide online at: youngwomenshealth.org/cyberbullying.html

Other online resources you can visit to learn more about cyberbullying are:

- www.safekids.com
- stopcyberbullying.com
- npc.org/cyberbullying



Emily's Health Tips

Summer is finally here! It's the best time of year to go outside with your friends and soak up some sun. Although the sun is a great source of vitamin D, it can also cause damage to your skin. In addition to wrinkles, harmful effects such as skin cancer may affect you later on in life. According to the American Cancer Society, over 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year; over half of them before the age of 64.

Skin cancer can affect people of any race, ethnicity, or gender, but if you have fair skin, blonde or red hair, and light eyes, the chances are much greater. In fact, there is a 1 in 50 chance for people with a light skin tone to be diagnosed with skin cancer.

The three different types of skin cancer are:

- **Basal cell carcinoma** (the most common form)
- **Squamous cell carcinoma** (the least common)
- **Malignant melanoma** (the most deadly form)

Skin cancer can be detected early by checking your skin regularly. Be alert to changes in the number, size, shape, and color of your moles or pigmented areas. If you notice that any of your moles have changed, gotten darker, bigger, or irregular around the edges, you should make an appointment with your HCP or dermatologist.

*Special thanks to Jeanine Maglione RN, Dermatology Nurse at Children's Hospital Boston her help.

Here are a few important reminders:

- **Limit sun exposure** between the hours of 10am-3pm when UV rays are the strongest.
- **Always cover up** with clothing, a hat, and sunglasses that block at least 99% of UVA rays.
- **Use sunscreen** with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15 or more; even on cloudy days. Apply it on any part of your skin that might be exposed to the sun, including your scalp. Remember to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours (even when the weather is overcast) and during high altitude activities such as skiing or mountain climbing. Go in the shade right away if you notice that your skin is getting pink!
- **Avoid tanning beds**; they use UV light that can damage your skin.
- **Don't forget to check your skin** regularly, and make an appointment with your HCP or dermatologist if you notice any changes.

For more information about skin cancer, you can visit the following pages online:

- cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/skin
- childrenshospital.org/az/Site1603/mainpageS1603PO.html



Get Ready: A Healthy College Beginning

Congrats to all the seniors that have recently graduated from high school! If you're going to attend college in the fall, planning ahead will make sure you have the best and safest experience possible. Before you set off for college, you'll need to be up-to-date on all of your vaccinations (also called "immunizations", or "shots"). Even if you'll be living off campus, you'll have to show documentation that you've had all of the shots that your school requires. Set up an appointment with your PCP (primary care provider) soon after (or even before) you graduate from high school. This way, you'll be able to discuss which shots you've already had and which ones you'll need to get. You'll also be able to have your PCP fill out your medical record form for college, and obtain your own copy of your medical records. **The vaccinations that are routinely recommended for new college students include:**

- ★ **MCV4 (meningococcal)**: This shot is recommended for all teens living in close quarters (including residence halls or dorms) to reduce the risk of getting Meningitis.
- ★ **Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)**: You should get this shot between the ages of 11-24 and then the **Td** every 10 years.
- ★ **Varicella**: Anyone 13 and older who hasn't had chickenpox or doesn't have evidence of immunity should receive 2 doses, 4-8 weeks apart.
- ★ **MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)**: You should have already received 2 doses.
- ★ **Hepatitis A**: This vaccine has 2 doses and is highly recommended.
- ★ **Influenza**: To protect yourself against the H1N1 virus and the seasonal flu, visit an on-campus clinic.
- Depending on your major, you may also be required to have a **TB (tuberculosis)** test.



Find us online! The CYWH is on Twitter and Facebook! We're tweeting and posting about up-to-the-minute info on what's going on around the Center; including events, new blog entries, health chat reminders, and brand new health guides posted on our website. Follow us at: twitter.com/cywh/ and become a fan of the CYWH by visiting our website youngwomenshealth.org, and clicking on the facebook link on our main page.

I know these vaccines may sound painful, but chances are you've already had most of them. Trust me; protecting yourself from a dangerous illness is worth the little pinch. Aside from getting all of the necessary vaccines, take time to talk with your PCP to find out all you'll need to know about the best ways to stay healthy at college! ♥