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Bee Well

Thomas County Wellness Newsletter - August 2020

Welcome Back to School



When school closed in March, we quickly learned and incorporated words like quarantine, isolation, and stay at home into our regular vocabulary. And for many of us (optimistic teachers at heart), we thought we could stay home, flatten the curve, and get back to school as usual. I'm not sure anyone thought that school this fall would pose as many logistical challenges as it has.

However, the ingenuity and resourcefulness of teachers and educators has been on full display as we make plans to offer school in three formats, continue to feed our kids, and prepare to safely love on our kids and each other as we foster the relationships that we cultivate each year. This year will look much different than others without a doubt, but I know that Thomas County faculty and staff will rise to the challenge. We are so happy you are here, Welcome Back!

Monthly Observances

August is National Immunization Awareness Month.

This annual observance highlights the importance of getting recommended vaccines throughout your life. You have the power to protect yourself and your family against serious diseases through on-time vaccination.

Make sure you talk to your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional to ensure you, your child, and your family are up to date on recommended vaccines.

You can also visit the CDC's [Interactive Vaccine Guide](#), which provides information on the vaccines



recommended throughout your lifetime. Additionally, the CDC's [adult vaccine assessment tool](#) can tell you which vaccines might be right for you (CDC, 2020).

August is also Children's Eye Health and Safety Month. Students face special challenges to the eyes when they are under academic performance pressure. Lack of sleep, prolonged [computer use](#) and long hours studying make for tired eyes that are dry, scratchy and achy.

Prolonged computer use contributes to eye fatigue because you blink less frequently. Less blinking significantly reduces lubrication in the eye making it feel tired, scratchy and "dry" as a result. Also eyes are not designed for prolonged focus on a single object, such as the computer. Remedy: place a note on the computer screen as a reminder to blink and to look away from the screen and focus on objects in the distance. Looking out a window (20 - 20 - 20 rule: for every 20 minutes of computer work, look away for 20 seconds, and focus on a scene or object at least 20 feet



away) is a good break for the eyes. The key is to give your eyes a rest (American Academy of Ophthalmology 2020).

Find out more about eye health and cool, classroom content at [NEI for Kids](#).

P-EBT

The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) is partnering with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to provide food benefits to families through the Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT). This program will provide extra help to families of more than 1.1M children who normally would receive free or reduced school lunch.



Families will receive a one-time allotment of \$256.50 in total P-EBT benefits per child.

The program is available to families not currently receiving SNAP but approved for the free or reduced school lunch program. As such, **ALL THOMAS COUNTY STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY** regardless of whether they currently receive SNAP benefits. Once the application is approved, an EBT card will be mailed to the family within three (3) to four (4) weeks. The family will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card. [Apply for P-EBT](#)

Be Well SHBP

Stress Less Challenge

August is a great time to manage your stress levels, earn well-being incentive points that can be applied to your choice of reward, AND **be entered in a sweepstakes to win a great stress-relieving prize pack!** Although stress is a normal part of everyday life, when stress levels skyrocket to an unhealthy level it can take a big toll on your overall health. The Be Well SHBP program has the tools to help.

If you are enrolled in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) through either Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield or UnitedHealthcare (non-Medicare Advantage), you and your covered spouse can join the August “Stress Less Challenge” and be entered to win one of 100 prize packs. **The prize pack includes a pair of noise-canceling headphones, a 15 lb queen size weighted blanket, and an aromatherapy essential oil diffuser/cool mist humidifier.** Plus, you can earn up to 120 well-being incentive points when you complete the challenge goal of tracking either calm or productive days during the month of August.



To join the August Stress Less Challenge (and be entered in the sweepstakes), follow these steps:

- If you have never registered for an account on BeWellSHBP.com [register here](#); if you already have an account use your email and password to [log in here](#) (or log in to your account through the Sharecare app).
- Click on the “Achieve” navigational link and then proceed to the Challenges section. Switch to the “Available” view (in Active/Upcoming Challenges) to see what is available to join.
- [Register for the Stress Less Challenge](#). During the month of August, track at least 21 days of calm or productive stress levels to successfully complete the challenge.

The Be Well SHBP program has many resources to help keep your stress levels in check! Schedule a coaching call, or review articles and videos in the “Discover” area of your account.

Better Sleep Resources



A good night’s sleep can help you feel energized, lower your risk of obesity, improve concentration and so much more. A good bedroom setup can help! Check out all of the resources that SHBP has to help you maximize your sleep!

- [5 Foods to Avoid before Bed](#)
- [Sleep Habits Flyer](#)
- [Sleep Sanctuary Postcard](#)

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