



GET SMART Newsletter

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Is There a Link Between Antibiotics and Childhood Obesity?

By: Lindsay Vogt MPH, CHES®, Sr. health management consultant, Capital BlueCross

We all can agree that antibiotics are one of the greatest developments in modern medicine, but, like all good things, there are limitations and consequences. As a public health professional and a mom of two young girls, I've gathered information about antibiotic use, or misuse, and realized something that was a surprise to me but shouldn't have been a connection between a child's weight and antibiotic use. So, I've asked myself: "Are antibiotics causing children to gain weight?" The answer is not a simple one, and more research needs to be done. However, this possibility is just another reason why we all need to be more vigilant about antibiotic use.

In a BBC news² article, researchers said the 2014 study highlights that over prescribing inappropriate antibiotics could have a negative effect on child growth.

A similar study reported in The Lancet³ in 2016 suggested that infection, not antibiotic use, during infancy contributes to the risk of childhood obesity. While there is still more research to be done, it is clear that in addition to protecting our communities against antibiotic resistance, we also need to consider what the overuse or misuse of antibiotics could otherwise be doing to our children.

In a 2014 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)¹ article, researchers reported that frequent exposure to broad-spectrum antibiotics between the ages of 0 and 23 months is associated with early childhood obesity. Broad-spectrum antibiotics are effective against a variety of bacteria; two of the most well-known and commonly used are amoxicillin and tetracycline.



Capital BlueCross is committed to our members and the community; we are always open to identifying ways to target this growing concern. Discussions among Capital BlueCross, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and other partners have been beneficial in coordinating consistent messaging and identifying new opportunities to develop more programming to support safe antibiotic use.

The article also noted an increased risk of childhood obesity with more antibiotic use, mostly for children who had used broad-spectrum drugs on four or more occasions. Weight gain in animals that have been given antibiotics has been well documented for years.

References:

1. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/1909801>
2. <http://www.bbc.com/news/health-29409087>
3. [http://thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587\(16\)30281-9/fulltext](http://thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587(16)30281-9/fulltext)

Summertime Family Exercise Fun!

By: Daniella Hendriksen, CPT

Play at the park!

- Find a playground with monkey bars or straight bars for an upper body workout.
- Pull ups, dead hangs, dips, and hanging leg raises are a few fun things to try while your kids play.

Make a family sports/games night

- Play soccer, tennis, baseball, basketball, tag, tug of war, Frisbee, kickball or any other family friendly sports that get you moving.

Trampoline fun

- Jumping is a great exercise for adults as well as for kids!
- Trampoline jumping is one of the best aerobic activities you can do. It is a low-impact exercise that will not stress your joints as much as jogging would.
- The higher you jump, the more calories you burn! Try jumping for 10 minutes.
- Add some fun movements at the top of your jump for an added challenge. Tuck your knees to your chest or add a twist or a kick.
- Muscles worked during a trampoline routine are abdominals, quads, hamstrings and glutes.

Weight-bearing activities for strong bones

- Weight-bearing activities are those done while you are standing.
 - Jumping rope
 - Hopscotch
 - Jogging

Biking

- Go on a nature biking trail or bike around the neighborhood.

Walks

- Go for a walk before or after dinner together.
- Choose to walk instead of drive if possible.
- Toddlers and small children need exercise too. Instead of putting them in a grocery cart or stroller let them practice their running/walking.
- Take the stairs instead of elevators.

Activity Corner!



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