

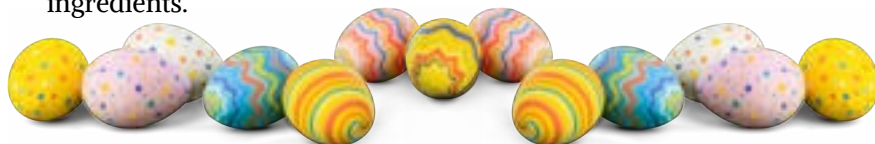


April 2023

## Health & Safety Tips for Spring Break

During Spring Break, your children may participate in egg hunts and want to consume lots of candy. Here are some practical and important ways to keep your children safe at this time of year.

-  **Be mindful of choking hazards.** Candy and toys with small parts can be problematic if a young child swallows them. Never leave your child unsupervised while he/she is eating.
-  **Be aware of egg safety.** Eggs should always be refrigerated prior to use. Do not eat or cook any eggs that have cracks. Do not eat or cook any eggs that have been unrefrigerated for more than two hours.
-  **Safe hunting.** Egg hunts are great fun for children, but they can present hazards as well. There are several places that eggs should not be hidden: near electrical outlets, in plants that have thorns, in holes in the ground, or near glass. Additionally, if you have a wide range of ages participating in the egg hunt, consider planning the hunt in stages (younger kids first, then the older kids) or use a color code system in which children under five can only pick up pink eggs, older kids can only pick up purple ones.
-  **Be careful with animals.** Baby chicks and bunny rabbits are very popular this time of year, but it's important to remember that animals carry all sorts of bacteria. If your child handles an animal that is not your own pet, make sure they wash their hands afterward.
-  **Food allergies.** If you are purchasing candy for a community/school event, keep in mind that some people have allergies to dairy, peanuts and gluten, so it's best to avoid buying candy that contains those ingredients.



### Important Dates Please Note:

April 7 - Centers  
Closed

April 10 - Centers  
Closed

April 14, 11:00 AM -  
Health Advisory  
Committee Meeting

## Health Advisory

If you have an interest in health and nutrition, and would enjoy being more involved with Head Start children and their families, please consider joining our Health Advisory Committee. Let us know you're interested by scanning the QR Code below or visiting [bit.ly/3n9Ovdl](https://bit.ly/3n9Ovdl)



# Stress Awareness: Anxiety

Since 1992, April has been designated as Stress Awareness Month in the US. This year, the theme is anxiety and how it contributes to stress.

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of overwhelming concern, dread, worry, and/or general uneasiness. Although anxiety is a state of mind, it can also carry with it physical symptoms such as a rapid heartbeat or heavy breathing/hyperventilating and headaches or even body aches.

## What Should I Do When I Feel Anxious?

There are a number of things that you can do to lower your anxiety, both in the moment when you are feeling anxious and also in your day-to-day life, to prevent anxiety from creeping in to bother you.

- **Talk about it.** Share with someone you trust that you are struggling with anxiety. This could be a friend, family member, professional counselor/therapist, or your regular doctor. Everyone deals with anxiety; do not be afraid to ask for help if you feel as though yours is interfering with your ability to enjoy life.
- **Breathe.** Breathing exercises can bring a calmness that lessens or eliminates the impact of stress. Try taking long deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Inhale and exhale slowly, listening to the sound of your breath as you do. You may find that closing your eyes while you do this is also helpful.
- **Exercise.** Moving physically can help get you out of your head when your thoughts become overwhelming. The exercise does not need to be high intensity – something as simple as going for a walk could provide relief.
- **Eat Healthy and Regularly.** When your body is healthy because you are feeding it the correct foods for the energy it needs, your mental health also benefits. Do not skip meals or fill up on junk food but rather give your body (and mind!) the fuel it needs to get you through the day.
- **Get Enough Rest.** Getting good quality sleep is especially difficult when we're feeling anxious. Try making a "brain dump" – writing down everything that's bothering you. Decide what you can change, and make a list of the things you can do to tackle your stressors. Everything else – well, you can't change it anyway, so why let it rob you of sleep? Other tips include limiting your caffeine consumption in the afternoon/evening, avoid using drugs and alcohol, and go to bed when you feel tired; don't push yourself to stay up later.



# Nutrition: Oatmeal Cookies

April 30 is National Oatmeal Cookie Day. Here's a simple recipe from Quaker Oats to help you make these tasty treats!

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 Cup(s) (2-1/2 sticks) margarine or butter, softened
- 3/4 Cup(s) firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup(s) granulated sugar
- 1 Egg(s)
- 1 Teaspoon(s) vanilla
- 1 1/2 Cup(s) all-purpose flour
- 1 Teaspoon(s) Baking Soda
- 1 Teaspoon(s) ground cinnamon
- 1/2 Teaspoon(s) salt (optional)
- 1/4 Teaspoon(s) ground nutmeg
- 3 Cup(s) oats (quick or old fashioned, uncooked)

## Instructions:

Heat oven to 375°F. In large bowl, beat margarine and sugars until creamy. Add egg and vanilla; beat well. Add combined flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and nutmeg; mix well. Add oats; mix well. Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 9 minutes for a chewy cookie or 10 to 11 minutes for a crisp cookie. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets; remove to wire rack. Cool completely. Store tightly covered.



# Child Abuse Prevention

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. There are many things that you can do to prevent child abuse in your home and in the community. Here are some helpful ways you can prevent child abuse from taking place.

1. **Teach children their rights.** When children are taught they are special and have the right to be safe, they are less likely to think that abuse is their fault, and more likely to report an offender.
2. **Know what child abuse is.** Physical and sexual abuse are clearly signs of mistreatment, but so is neglect, or the failure of parents or other caregivers to provide a child with the food, clothing, and care that they need. Children can also suffer emotional abuse when they are rejected, constantly berated, or kept isolated from others.
3. **Know the signs.** Unexplained injuries aren't the only signs of abuse. Depression, fear of a certain adult, difficulty trusting others or making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, and hostility are often signs of family problems and may indicate that a child is being neglected or abused.
4. **Report abuse.** If you witness a child being harmed or see evidence of abuse, make a report to your state's child protective services department or local police. When talking to a child about abuse, listen carefully, assure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling an adult, and reassure the child that he or she is not responsible for what happened.

SHORE UP! Head Start staff are mandated reporters in the state of Maryland, which means we are required to report any potential signs of abuse when we see them.



# Cold or Allergies?

Ready or not, allergy season is now upon us. Often, parents think their child is sick when it's actually just allergies (or vice versa).

How can you tell the different between an illness and a seasonal allergy? Some symptoms are the same for both situations, but there are a few key differences you can look for.

**Itchy or red eyes.** This is a hallmark symptom of allergies, but rarely occurs with a cold.

**Fever.** If your child is running a fever, it is not allergies. Allergies will not cause a person to run a fever.

**Body aches.** If your child is complaining that their limbs hurt or they hurt all over, it is not due to allergies - they're sick.



**Timing.** If your child seems to "get sick" around the same time every year, there is a good chance that it might actually be allergies instead.

**Duration.** If your child's symptoms get worse over several days, it is probably a cold. In that case it will last anywhere from three days up to two weeks. Allergy symptoms will improve once your child is no longer exposed to the allergen. If your child seems to have allergy symptoms all year, they may be allergic to things in the home, such as dust mites, animals, or mold.

As always, consult your pediatrician if you are concerned about your child's health and any lingering symptoms he/she may have.