



Dr. Shama Faheem is the Chief Medical Officer for the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network.



Mental Health Awareness

Back to School Stress

Returning to school after a long summer break can be exciting for some kids while stressful for others. Whether it's starting the new school year off at a new building or shifting from your summer schedule, it's normal for kids to need some time to adjust to a different routine.

Here are some helpful tips by just remembering **W-O-R-K-S**

Work on the schedule: Many times, the long and lazy days of summer lend themselves to staying up late and sleeping in. Many experts recommend, if you can, before the school year begins, start establishing regular bedtimes and waking the children up as if they were in school. Try to align their mealtimes with the school year as well.

Organize: Establish a reminder checklist or calendar with important assignments and due dates. Plan for the busy morning and help your child pick out clothes and arrange their backpack and supplies the night before. Help them prepare for homework and build in a break time between getting home from school and starting homework.

Reassure: Back to school anxiety and the pressure to interact with others can be more pronounced in some children. Reassure them that you are available to listen and help them process their feelings. "What to Expect" discussions may be helpful in these situations. If needed, drive them by the school a day earlier and walk them through the anticipated day.

Keep yourself involved: It is important for parents to stay in touch with the school and teachers. Stay involved with the child and unwind together after a long day. Try having one-on-one time with them every day where you both do something together that is fun, relaxing and enjoyable.

Stay consistent: Avoid the avoidance. If your child is getting stressed about going back to school, do not give in by allowing them to take the day off or skip school. This can reinforce school avoidance. If you are having difficulty managing this alone, seek professional help.





Dr. Shama Faheem is the Chief Medical Officer for the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network.



Mental Health Awareness

Back to School Vaccinations

With all the talk of COVID boosters, flu season, and even new protection against respiratory syncytial, or RSV, it's easy for Michigan parents to get overwhelmed. According to the State of Michigan's vaccination report card, the rates for traditional vaccines for the youngest children up to 3 years has fallen to 66%, down from 74% at the end of 2019. The downward trend that started during pandemic has persisted. The rates for teenagers had a decrease of approximately 1%.

It is important for families to plan for these well visits and vaccination and avoid last minute rush. For this year's back-to-school considerations, parents also have to decide whether to get a COVID booster for their child, since it's not required. And if so, whether to ask for a booster now or wait for newly reformulated versions in October. Pfizer and Moderna are currently offering a second-generation COVID vaccine, a bivalent version that protects against both the original COVID variant and the first-generation omicron variants. Newly formulated versions are expected in October by Moderna, Pfizer, and Novavax. These versions are designed to match the currently circulating XBB variants, descendants of the original Omicron variant. Several Michigan infectious disease experts are advising healthy adult patients to wait if they can and get the updated fall version, however, pediatric experts emphasize getting the booster as soon as they are due to avoid getting sick in the first weeks of school and to avoid bringing it to parents and grandparents who are more likely to get sick from it.



Mental Health Help is available:

- Behavioral health – which includes mental health, substance use, and more – is a key part of your overall well-being. The DWIHN website offers a free and anonymous assessment to help you determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a behavioral health professional.
<https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/DWIHN>
- Another excellent digital tool to support mental health is myStrength, an app with web and mobile tools designed to support your goals and wellbeing. myStrength's highly interactive, individually-tailored resources allow users to address depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, chronic pain and sleep challenges, while also supporting the physical and spiritual aspects of whole-person health. Visit the DWIHN website to learn more:
https://www.dwihn.org/documents/myStrength_Flyer.pdf
- If you or someone you know needs mental health, substance use or disability related information, please call our 24/7 Access Helpline at 800-241-4949. Information and resources can also be found on the DWIHN website: <https://www.dwihn.org/brochures-and-handouts-DWIHN-Services.pdf>