

# healthy NEWZ 4U

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## In this Issue:

In this issue of Healthy Newz 4U you'll find tips and hints about staying healthy and feeling great...everyday.

- Stay Active and Kick Cabin Fever and Coping with Bullies
- Smile Big! Caring for teeth and gums
- Embrace your Braces
- Backpack Basics

To get reliable and timely information, check out the newspaper to get the news about these and other issues that matters to you.

# Stay Active and Kick CABIN FEVER



## Do the long Iowa winters make you feel cooped up this time of the year?

Staying active can get more challenging as the temperatures drop outside. But don't let that keep you from getting at least 30 minutes of exercise every day. It's the key to maintaining a healthy weight and provides numerous health benefits.

Join a sports team. Go for a walk in the school gym. Dance. Check out your local newspaper for fun activities happening in your area. Whatever you do, make exercise a part of your daily routine and have fun.

## Need an idea?

Try this easy game with a group of people (or on your own). All you need is a pair of dice!

Stand in a circle — make sure you have some room. Each person gets to choose one activity for the whole group to do from the list below. Roll dice to find out how many repetitions to do, or minutes to spend on each activity. Put on your favorite music and enjoy!

- Running in place
- Dancing
- Lifting hand weights
- Shadow-boxing
- Skipping
- Jumping jacks
- Lunges
- Push-ups
- Sit-ups
- Squats



# Let's

# Be Friends!

## 5 Ways to Survive Cliques at School

If there are a lot of cliques at your school, it might feel like you're living out a scene from the movie, *Mean Girls*. Just like in the movie, a clique is a group of people with a lot of rules about who can be a part of their group — hurting a lot of people along the way.

If you're on the outside of a clique looking in, cliques can make you feel like an outcast. You may find that people you used to be friends with are now mean to you on purpose because you don't fit in with that clique. If you belong to a clique, you might feel a lot of pressure to always stay on the group's "good side" or be kicked out of the group and no longer be popular. Either way, cliques are about power and trying to create a social status at school.

Here are five tips to survive cliques and be confident in yourself!

### 1 Be True to Yourself.

If you're encountering cliques, ask yourself these questions about what you and your real friends give each other.

- Do you want to be part of a group because you need to feel accepted or because you actually share their values?
- Has your group of friends morphed into something you don't like?
- How do your friends influence the way people think about you?
- Does this make you feel good or bad?

### 2 Stay involved in activities that make you feel good about yourself.

Getting involved in things that really interest you is a great way to find a sense of belonging. Joining activities you enjoy will help you feel valued, and take your mind off a group that's not welcoming. If you don't have friends at school, join a volunteer group (helping others can make you feel good about yourself).

### 3 Keep your options open.

Cliques can be very limiting in the way they control how members look, think, dress, and behave. Don't let cliques keep you from getting to know people who may become close friends and share the same values, goals, and behaviors.

### 4 Stand up for yourself.

If you feel your group of friends is turning into a clique, take a stand for your beliefs. It might turn out that the clique will go on without you, but there's also a chance that others might follow your lead and stop acting so clique-y. If it's too hard to get up the courage to challenge a clique that doesn't mean you have to participate in things that feel wrong to you. It's also important to remember that if you see a clique is bullying or intimidating others, you should let teachers or counselors know about it.

### 5 Have a mind of your own.

Be sensitive to others and don't go along with what you don't believe is right — even if others are doing it. You are the only one responsible for your behavior. True and lasting friends will respect your opinions, rights, and independent choices.

## What's the SECRET to being popular and having friends?

Be a good friend to others! People who find true and lasting popularity are people who have good friendship skills. Being a good friend means being respectful, fair, interested, trustworthy, honest, caring, and kind. So if you want to have friends, be just the kind of friend you'd like to have.

Source: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/friends/cliques.html#](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/friends/cliques.html#)



## 7 Tips for Coping with Bullies

Both guys and girls can be bullies. Bullies may be outgoing and aggressive. Or a bully can appear reserved on the surface, but may try to manipulate people in subtle, deceptive ways, like anonymously starting a damaging rumor just to see what happens.

Bullies like to dominate others and generally don't have feelings of empathy or caring toward other people. Although most bullies think they're cool and have the right to push people around, others are actually insecure. They put other people down to make themselves feel more interesting or powerful.



Here are some things you can do to contend with bullies and stand up for yourself and others.

### **1 Ignore the bully and walk away.**

Bullies thrive on the reaction they get and if you walk away or ignore hurtful actions, words, e-mails or instant messages, you're telling the bully that you just don't care. Over time, the bully will get bored and stop bothering you.

### **2 Laugh it off.**

A bully wants you to get mad and lose your cool. Instead of losing your temper, use humor — it can throw the bully off guard. Release your anger in other ways, like through exercise or writing down your feelings (make sure you tear up any letters or notes you write in anger).

### **3 Keep your hands to yourself.**

When figuring out how to deal with a bully, remember that using physical force (like kicking, hitting, or pushing) is NOT an option. Stand up for yourself in other ways, and gain control of the situation by walking away or by being assertive in your actions. Aggressive responses tend to lead to more violence and more bullying for the victims.

### **4 Practice confidence.**

Practice ways to respond to the bully verbally or through your behavior. Practice feeling good about yourself (even if you have to fake it at first).

### **5 Take charge of your life.**

Do things that make you feel good about yourself. Exercise is one way to boost confidence and feel stronger. Learn a martial art, take a yoga class, or hone your skills in something like chess, art, music, computers, or writing. The confidence you gain will help you ignore the mean kids.

### **6 Talk about it.**

Talk to a guidance counselor, teacher, or friend — anyone you can talk to about the fears and frustrations that can build when you're being bullied.

### **7 Find your real friends.**

If you've been bullied with rumors or gossip, all of the above tips apply. Take it one step further and find one or two real friends and confide how the gossip has hurt your feelings. Real friends will know gossiping and rumors are petty, rude, and immature.

Source: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/problems/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html)



# SMILE BIG!

## Caring for Teeth and Gums

Taking care of your teeth and gums is an important part of your daily routine (or should be). According to dentists you should brush twice a day and floss your teeth once a day. Making this a habit now, will keep your smile looking great, help you prevent tooth decay and gum disease, and help you avoid the dentist's drill later!

### What's the big deal about flossing?

Dentists suggest that brushing your teeth without flossing is like washing only 65 percent of your body and neglecting the other 35 percent! Brushing your teeth won't remove the plaque and particles of food between your teeth, under the gum line, (or under braces), so make it a part of your daily routine.

### Braces Getting in the Way?

Having braces may not always be fun, but the good news is you're on your way to a beautiful smile. The not-so-good-news is that you'll need to take some extra time to properly care for your teeth and gums while you have braces. Talk to your orthodontist to make sure you're taking all of the necessary steps and time you need to care for them — like brushing after every meal and flossing around the brackets and wires.

## Embrace your Braces!

Chances are it took a little time to get used to the idea getting braces. How will they look on me? Will my friends tease me? Will it hurt? Here are some ways to deal with wearing braces that will make the experience easier for you.

### 1. Make a plan.

You're going to have to make some adjustments to your daily routine, like brushing after every meal and avoiding certain foods. Planning ahead for these new rules will ease the transition for you.

### 2. Accessorize with braces.

One of the fun ways to express yourself through braces is the option to wear colored rubber bands. Some doctors will give you the chance to change your band color regularly. Check out colors to coordinate with upcoming holidays or school colors.

### 3. Minimize pain.

Besides the everyday hassle of metal taking up space in your mouth, braces can be painful — especially after an adjustment. Talk to your doctor about ways to ease pain from post check-up shifting or using wax to protect gums from sharp wires and edges.

### 4. Keep your eye on the prize.

Braces can take some getting used to. But just think of how great your teeth are going to look when you're done. It's a small sacrifice for a beautiful smile that will be with you for the rest of your life.

### 5. Look on the bright side.

Getting braces sooner, means you'll get them off sooner — enough said. The reality is you have braces. Own it. Flaunt it. Embrace it.

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2066549\\_cope-braces-as-teenager.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2066549_cope-braces-as-teenager.html)

## Backpack Basics

Lugging your books and supplies around in a backpack is convenient, but don't overload it and break your back!

- Your backpack should not weigh more than 15 percent of your body weight. *Example: If you weigh 100 pounds, you should not carry more than 15 pounds in your bag.*
  - Wear your backpack with both straps, not flung over one shoulder.
  - Choose a backpack with thick straps. Thin straps will dig into your arms and can interfere with circulation.
- Rolling backpacks are a great alternative if necessary. Just remember you still have to pull a rolling bag up stairs, so if you're regularly going up and down steps a rolling bag might not be the best option.



This program is brought to you by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the Iowa Newspaper Foundation. We are proud to offer *Healthy Newz 4U* as a resource to help increase knowledge about health and wellness.



Find additional information online at [www.HealthyNewz4U.com](http://www.HealthyNewz4U.com).

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