

New year, new tips for keeping your kids safe and healthy

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A new year can be a fresh start for you and your kids—and perhaps no year has needed a fresh start more than this one. So, a leading doctors' group is offering parents tips for a healthy "reset" in 2021.

Get immunized. First of all, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is recommending you make sure your [family](#) is up to date on vaccines. If your family hasn't yet been vaccinated for the flu, do that now, and be sure to call your pediatrician to make sure your kids are also up-to-date on their routine immunizations. And to help reduce the spread of germs—including the new coronavirus—be sure to teach kids good hand-washing habits.

Practice car safety. Parents of younger children should keep them safe in the car by keeping their car seats rear-facing as long as possible. The AAP recommends this for virtually all children under the age of 2 and most children up to age 4. Be sure to transmit your concerns to anyone who transports your child as well. Also, find out if your state has any new car seat laws.

Use online time wisely. Establish good digital habits, the AAP suggests, by researching age-appropriate media and making a "family-use plan." Try to prevent unhealthy online gaming habits, and watch a show or play a [video game together](#), so that your kids' screen time isn't always alone time.

Get out there. It's easy, especially during COVID lockdowns, for kids to spend all their time indoors staring at screens. Offset all that screen use by spending more [time](#) outdoors—it's even good for your child's eye health to look at something other than screens. Being outdoors can also boost your children's mood and their levels of the "sunshine vitamin," vitamin D, while helping the whole family stay active.

Be good to yourself, too. Physically and mentally healthy parents are what kids need most. So, make sure you get proper rest and stay healthy, including regular check-ups. Practice self-care, the AAP suggests, and know that help is near if you're experiencing depression or anxiety.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more information on the [benefits of spending time outdoors](#).

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