

BACK-TO-SCHOOL STARTS WITH GOOD HEALTH

Episcopal Health Services Pediatrician Offers Expert Advice for Parents

Back-to-school season can be hectic, but your child's health doesn't have to be. A little preparation before the first day of school can help ensure your child is healthy, confident, and ready to learn. Annual checkups, healthy routines, and guidance from your pediatrician can set your family up for a successful school year.

According to Cynthia Criss, DO, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Episcopal Health Services, back-to-school preparation isn't just about buying notebooks and backpacks. "It's about making sure children are physically and emotionally ready to succeed. Consistent sleep schedules, nutritious meals, and annual checkups all play an important role in helping children concentrate, manage stress, and perform their best both inside and outside the classroom."

To help prepare parents for back-to-school, Dr. Criss shares healthy habits for the new year:

Schedule an Annual Well-Child Visit: Annual physical exams help ensure children are growing and developing appro-

priately. Make sure to complete medical forms before the school year begins.

Stay Up to Date on Vaccinations: Before school starts, make sure your child is current on all recommended immunizations, including the annual flu vaccine.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children 6 months of age and older receive a flu shot each year. Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that can lead to serious complications, particularly in young children. Flu season typically begins in the fall and peaks between December and February.

Prioritize Healthy Sleep: A consistent sleep schedule helps children stay focused, improves learning, supports emotional well-being, and strengthens the immune system. Begin adjusting bedtimes one to two weeks before school starts, and limit screens for at least one hour before bedtime.

Start the Day with a Healthy Breakfast: Busy mornings can make breakfast easy to skip. Giving your child a balanced breakfast with protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables provides them with the energy to stay focused and engaged throughout the school day.



Cynthia Criss, DO, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Episcopal Health Services

Practice Backpack Safety: An overloaded backpack with heavy books and sports equipment can lead to neck, shoulder, and back pain. According to The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a child's backpack should weigh no more than 5% to 10% of their total body weight. To prevent pain, a backpack should also be worn using both shoulder straps and fit snug against the back without hanging too low.

Support Your Child's Emotional Well-Being: Starting a new school year can bring both excitement and anxiety. Talk with your child about what to expect, encourage them to share any concerns, and watch for signs of stress, anxiety, or depression. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 31.9% of adolescents experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime. Early conversations can help children feel more confident and supported during the transition.

Episcopal Health Services: Episcopal Health Services Inc., (EHS) is a health system located on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, New York. The system provides emergency and ambulatory care to the densely populated and culturally and economically diverse Rockaways and Five Towns populations. The system provides people of all faiths with comprehensive preventive, diagnostic treatment, and rehabilitative services, regardless of their ability to pay.

To schedule an appointment with a pediatrician, visit EHS.org or call 718-EHS-DOCS. ■

NEWS FROM THE HILLS

By Chanita Teitz



We all have our pet peeves, and I admit I tend to be a little judgmental sometimes when watching cooking shows. It is a trivial annoyance, but it really bothers me when they put cheese on absolutely everything. Meatballs, chicken, fish, you name it, they always top it off with mozzarella or parmesan. What really gets to me is seeing a Jewish cook making a beautiful Friday night roast chicken dinner but then throwing cheese on it or serving a dairy dessert.

I know I shouldn't judge. People can eat whatever they want, and we are certainly not trained to judge others. This is exactly what this week's *parashah*, *Parashas Shoftim*, is all about. Moshe Rabbeinu tells *Bnei Yisroel* to establish a proper court system and appoint judges who are honest, truthful, and never take bribes. They are the ones tasked with making the tough decisions for the good of the people and teaching right from wrong.

Thinking about judges takes me back a number of years ago to my niece's wedding. It took place in her backyard in the town of Hoshaya in the north of Israel. The setting was breathtaking. The wedding faced the beautiful mountains of the Galil, including Tzipori, which is exactly where the Sanhedrin, our highest court of judges, once sat.

Looking out at those mountains, you realize that being a true judge is not an easy task. *Aharon HaKohen* understood this well. He was a *rodef shalom*, a pursuer of peace. He constantly tried to patch things up between people so that they would not even need to go to court in the first place. There is a time to be vigilant and follow the strict letter of the law, but making peace is always the ultimate goal.

So I will try to keep my opinions about cooking shows to myself and leave the judging to the experts. We just need to focus on being honest, truthful, and pursuing peace in our own lives.

Wishing everyone a good Shabbos. ■

Chanita Teitz is a real-estate broker at Astor Brokerage in Kew Gardens Hills, serving the entire Queens vicinity. For all your real-estate needs, call her at 718-263-4500 or e-mail chanita@astorbrokerage.com. Read more of Chanita Teitz's articles at 5TJT.com.

You shall not take a bribe, for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the just

(Devarim 16:19)

As soon as [the judge] accepts a bribe from [a litigant], it is impossible for him not to be favorably disposed towards him.

(Rashi)



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