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## Our “Military” Children & PHAs

October is Children’s Health Month. Children are, of course, our most precious resource and we dedicate this newsletter to the health of our children.

### Immunizations

Why should you get your children immunized?

- Immunizations protect your child from dangerous diseases.
- They help reduce the spread of disease to others.
- Getting immunized costs less than getting treated for the diseases that the shots protect you from.
- Vaccines have very few serious side effects.
- They are often needed for entrance into school or day care. And they may be needed for employment or for travel to another country.

After getting approval from several expert groups, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the immunization schedules. Each year, the CDC reviews the immunization schedules for children and adults and makes new ones as needed. To find the most updated recommendations please visit the CDC website [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) or the American Academy of Pediatrics at <http://www.aap.org>. You will be able to find the immunizations schedules on both websites and ensure that your children are on track even while stationed in remote areas, as well as having access to current and credible information about immunizations. Immunizations are a covered TRICARE benefit and should be arranged through your local ISOS provider.

### Childhood Obesity

The “Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future” initiative was launched by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This year’s focus is on childhood obesity. Overweight or obese adults are more at risk for several health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. The “Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future” campaign supports the Surgeon General’s efforts to encourage children to stay active, have healthy eating habits, and make healthy choices. The campaign is geared toward ongoing efforts to raise awareness of childhood obesity and encourage children to eat right and exercise, and information about those efforts is available at “Take the Pledge” to help prevent childhood obesity <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/>.

Children who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. Healthy lifestyle habits can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing such diseases. From articles and video messages, to links, games and “widgets,” this website is designed to offer something for users of all ages at <http://www.tricare.mil/getfit>. Partner initiatives include a special childhood obesity “Dietitian’s Voice” column at <http://www.commissaries.com>. Military families can also get additional information on losing weight, getting in shape and maintaining good health at the DeCA Web site, including advice-packed columns, recipes and an open question and answer forum.

Other resources to better educate and assist parents in the battle against obesity are available on <http://www.militaryonesource.com>. The MHS Web site at <http://www.health.mil/Messages/Message.aspx?id=60> features debates, news, videos and links to other resources to aid in the fight against childhood obesity.

## **Periodic Health Assessment (PHA)**

### **Army:**

Soldiers can now complete their portion of the Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) online at AKO. Complete your portion of the PHA, then schedule an appointment with your medical provider for them to complete their part of the form. In remote locations this can be a HN provider, embassy physician or unit medical provider. After completion of the form the data MUST be entered into AKO by someone with MEDPROS access, please contact your chain of command for guidance with this part of the process. Please see Army PHA on the AKO website for complete instructions and links.

Your Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) record in the Medical Protection System (MEDPROS) will be overdue on 11/1/2008, which impacts your medical readiness status. The PHA will be an annual requirement and replaces the 5-year periodic physical exam effective 1 Nov 08. To start your PHA, go to My Medical Readiness in AKO and select the PHA link.

### **Navy & Marine Corps:**

Sailors and Marines are required to complete the PHA on their birth month of each year and it is reviewed twice a year during the PRT cycles to ensure it has been completed. This process will need to be completed through a local ISOS provider and given to your local chain of command for entry in your record. Please use this link for the current instruction covering PHA

<http://doni.daps.dla.mil/SECNAV.aspx?RootFolder=%2fDirectives%2f06000%20Medical%20and%20Dental%20Services%2f06%2d100%20General%20Physical%20Fitness&View=%7bE5C79018%2dFE07%2d40E1%2d8985%2dCD00E8C086EB%7d>. Also visit the NEHC website for the PHA form and other valuable tools to assist in the PHA process <http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/cps/pha.htm>.

### **Airforce:**

Airmen are required to complete the PHA on their birth month of each year. You can go to Airforce on Line and complete the questionnaire for the PHA then take the form to a local ISOS provider to complete the medical portion. Upon completion please give a copy of the form to your local chain of command for entry in your service record.

As always, we are interested in your feedback and any ideas for health care issues you would like our office to address in the future. Contact us at [TPhi@med.navy.mil](mailto:TPhi@med.navy.mil).

Sincerely,

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