

## **New Year's Resolutions for Kids**

**By Thomas Duff, MD**

Parents sometimes need to create opportunities to have important conversations with their children. The new year gives parents a perfect opportunity to talk to their children about age appropriate resolutions they can make to help themselves have a healthy and safe year. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) website [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) suggests these 20 healthy new year's resolutions for kids:

### **Preschoolers**

- I will clean up my toys.
- I will brush my teeth twice a day, wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating, and clean up my messes right away.
- I won't tease the family dog or even a friendly dog, and I will avoid being bitten by keeping my fingers and face away from his mouth.

### **School Age Kids**

- I will drink milk and lots of it, and limit soda and fruit drinks.
- I will spend a couple of minutes every morning and afternoon applying sunscreen before I go outdoors, even in winter. I will try to stay in the shade whenever possible and wear a hat and sunglasses, especially when I'm playing sports.
- I will try to find a sport (like basketball or soccer) or an activity (like jumping rope, dancing, or riding my bike) that I like and do it at least three times a week!
- I will always wear protective gear--especially a helmet--when cycling, scooting or blading.
- I will wear my seat belt every time I get in a car. I'll use a booster seat until I can correctly use a lap/shoulder seat belt.
- I'll be nice to other kids. It's easier and more fun than being mean, and I'll feel better about myself.
- I'll never give out personal information such as my name, home address, school name, or telephone number in an Internet chat room or on an Internet bulletin board. Also, I'll never send a picture of myself to someone I chat with on the computer without my parent's permission.
- If I come across an unsupervised gun, or another child with a gun, I will not touch the gun and get help from a parent or trusted adult.

## Teens

- I will eat at least one fruit and one vegetable every day, and I will limit the amount of soda I drink.
- I will take care of my body through sports, fitness and nutrition.
- I will choose non-violent television shows and video games, and I will only spend one to two hours each day-AT THE MOST-on these activities.
- I will check to see if I can give away any of my unwanted clothes and shoes to those in need.
- I will wipe negative "self talk" (i.e. "I can't do it" or "I'm so dumb") out of my vocabulary.
- Whenever I am feeling angry or stressed out, I will take a break and look for constructive ways to feel better, such as exercising, reading, writing in a journal, or talking out my problem with a parent or friend.
- When faced with a difficult decision I will talk to an adult about the options I may have.
- I will be smart about whom I choose to date.
- I will resist peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol.

*If you have difficulty talking to your kids about any of these subjects or are concerned about how he or she is developing, remember that your child's doctor can help. Dr. Tom Duff is Board Certified by the American Academy of Pediatrics and has been taking care of children in the capital region for more than 20 years. He is a partner in Community Care Physicians Latham Pediatrics Office located at the Capital Region Health Park in Latham, and can be reached at 783-3110.*