

Well Child Care at 5 Years

Nutrition

Your child may enjoy helping to choose and prepare the family meals with supervision. Children watch what their parents eat, so set a good example. This will help teach good food habits. Mealtime should be a pleasant time for the family. Avoid junk foods and soda pop. Televisions should never be on during mealtime. Your child should eat 5 or more servings of fruits/vegetables a day. Limit candy, soda, and high-fat snacks. Your child should have at least 2 cups of low-fat milk or other dairy products each day.

Development

Children at this age are imaginative, get along well with friends their own age, and have lots of energy. Be sure to praise children lavishly when they share things with each other.

Some children still wet the bed at night. If your child wets the bed regularly, ask your doctor about ways to help your child.

Five-year-olds usually are able to dress and undress themselves, understand rules in a game, and brush their own teeth. For behaviors that you would like to encourage in your child, try to catch your child being good. That is, tell your child how proud you are when he does things that help you or others.

Behavior Control

Find ways to reduce dangerous or hurtful behaviors. Also teach your child to apologize. Sending a child to a quiet, boring corner without anything to do (time-out) may be needed. The rule for how long a time-out should last is 1 minute for each year of age. Do not send a child to his room. A bedroom should always be a desirable location for your child. Ask your healthcare provider if you need help with your child's behavior.

Reading and Electronic Media

It is important to set rules about television watching. Limit electronic media (TV, DVDs, or computer) time to 1 or 2 hours per day of high quality children's programming. Participate with your child and discuss the content with them. Do not allow children to watch shows with violence or sexual behaviors. Find other activities besides watching TV that you can do with your child. Reading, hobbies, and physical activities are good choices.

Dental Care

- Brushing teeth regularly after meals and before bedtime is important. Think up a game and make brushing fun.
- Make an appointment for your child to see the dentist.

Safety Tips

Accidents are the number-one cause of serious injury and death in children. Keep your child away from knives, power tools, or mowers.

Fires and Burns

- Practice a fire escape plan.

- Check smoke detectors and replace the batteries as needed.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Teach your child to never play with matches or lighters.
- Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

Falls

- Never allow your child to climb on chairs, ladders, or cabinets.
- Do not allow your child to play on stairways.
- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.

Car Safety

- Everyone in a car should always wear seat belts or be in an appropriate booster seat or car seat.
- Don't buy motorized vehicles for your child.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- Always supervise street crossing. Your child may start to look in both directions but don't depend on her ability to cross a street alone.
- All family members should use a bicycle helmet, even when riding a tricycle.
- Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near traffic.
- Purchase a bicycle that fits your child well. Don't buy a bicycle that is too big for your child. Bikes that are too big are associated with a great risk of accidents.

Water Safety

- ALWAYS watch your child around swimming pools.
- Consider enrolling your child in swimming lessons.

Poisoning

- Teach your child to take medicines only with supervision.
- Teach your child to never eat unknown pills or substances.
- Put the poison center number on all phones.

Strangers

- Discuss safety outside the home with your child.
- Teach your child her address and phone number and how to contact you at work.
- Teach your child never to go anywhere with a stranger.
- Teach your child that no adult should tell a child to keep secrets from parents, no adult should show interest in private parts, and no adult should ask a child for help with private parts.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.
- Teach your child that even though smoking is unhealthy, he should be civil and polite when he is around people who smoke.

Immunizations

If he has not already gotten them, your child may receive shots.

An annual influenza shot is recommended for children up until 18 years of age. After a shot your child may run a fever and become irritable for about 1 day. Your child may also have some soreness, redness, and swelling in the area where a shot was given.

For fever, give your child an appropriate dose of acetaminophen. For swelling or soreness put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shot as often and as long as needed for comfort.

Call your child's healthcare provider immediately if:

- Your child has a fever over 105°F (40.5°C).
- Your child has a severe allergic reaction beginning within 2 hours of the shot (for example, hives, wheezing or noisy breathing, swelling of the mouth or throat).
- Your child has any other unusual reaction.

Next Visit

A check-up is recommended when your child is 6 years old.

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