

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 him good food habits. Mealtime should be a pleasant time for the family. Avoid snack foods.

Development and Discipline

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.

It is important to set rules about television watching. Limit total TV time for the whole family to 1 to 2 hours per day. Children should not be allowed to watch shows with violence or sexual behaviors. Watch TV with your child and discuss the shows. Find other activities other than watching TV that you can do with your child. Reading, hobbies, and physical activities are good alternatives to TV.

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.

Punishment for dangerous or hurtful behaviors is necessary. A child should also learn to apologize. Sending a child to a quiet, boring corner without anything to do for 5 minutes should follow.

Normal Development: 5 Years

Safety Tips

Accidents are the number-one cause of deaths in children.

Car Safety

- Everyone in a car must 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.
- Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near traffic.
- Don't buy a bicycle that is too big for your child.

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Practice a fire escape plan.
- Check smoke detectors and replace the batteries when necessary.
- 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) .

Prevent Drowning

- Continuously watch your child around swimming pools.
- Enroll your child in swimming lessons.

Avoid 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.

Safety Around Strangers

- Safety outside the home is very important to discuss 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.

Poisons

- 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.

Dental Care

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

Immunizations

Your child may receive one or more shots. 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 a dose of acetaminophen (240 mg = three 80-mg chewable tablets). 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 physician immediately if:

- Your child has a fever over 105°F (40.5°C).
- Your child has a severe allergic reaction after getting the shot.
- 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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