

# Pediatric Health Care

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## Your Child at Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten Years

Well visits are annual after age 2.

**Immunizations:** Your child may already be current on all routinely recommended vaccinations. Influenza vaccine may be recommended.

**Screenings:** Vision and hearing may be checked at this visit if you have any concerns. Other screening done at this age may include a tuberculin test (if indicated due to exposure to Tuberculosis) and blood pressure. If there is a family history of elevated cholesterol, some physicians will also obtain a screening blood test. Please let us know if you have any concerns about these issues.

### **Development:**

Children become increasingly competent in a number of settings including within the family, the school, the playground and the community. They are starting to learn the skills needed for survival and productive living as an adult. School-aged children were once thought to be in the latency ages when sexual aggressive drives did not occur. However, a healthy child will express normal impulses with more sophisticated use of fantasy and more intense participation in organized activities with peers. Increasing cognitive, social and physical capacities are realized. Children this age often identify strongly with famous people and have heroes. Emotional problems may occur when a child becomes lost in fantasy and fails to gain a sense of competency. Behavioral problems may occur if a child fails to use fantasy as a means of expressing feelings and acts impulses out instead.

Conscience and morality are developing now. Before seven years old, children identify conscience as being an external force but now, children feel their brain or their heart governs right and wrong. A dramatic cognitive change begins because children can now perform increasingly complex mental operations mentally without needing to physically manipulate something. This thinking may break down in children as well as adults if under significant stress or when there is illness.

Socially, children become focused on the outside community as opposed to home. By second grade, many children are more concerned about their friends' opinions rather than the opinions of their parents or teachers. They are beginning to learn how to make and keep friends. They also become more involved in leisure activities with their family which can become more complex. Most children participate in organized athletic or artistic activities.

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Children at this age should be active for at least an hour a day and keep screen time to a set limit. One way to motivate your child to do their reading is making it a rule to earn their screen time after getting their daily reading done. Electronics should be monitored with a review of internet safety and polite use of social media.

**Nutrition:** It is important that your child eat a well balanced diet. They should be eating at least 5 servings of fruits/vegetables a day and having at least 2 cups of low fat milk or dairy source. Your child may develop strong food preferences and may refuse to eat some foods. Balance good nutrition with what your child wants to eat. This will gradually change as they are exposed to different foods outside your home. Make mealtimes pleasant and encourage conversation. It is recommended to try to limit total screen time to 2 hours or less daily and get at least 1 hour of physical exercise each day. Children should not drink any sugary drinks.

## **New Calcium and Vitamin D Recommendations**

- Recommended daily calcium allowance: Depending on your child's age, please see if your child gets enough calcium from their diet and whether they need supplementation.

For all children over the age of 12 months, you will need to supplement only if they are not getting enough through their diet. From 12 months until 4 years you give 700 mg, from 4 years until 8 years you give 1000 mg and 9 years to 18 years 1300 mg, 19 years to 22 years- 1000 mg.

Dietary sources of calcium examples:

Yogurt, lowfat 8 ounces- 300-400 mg  
Mozzarella, part skim, 1.5 ounces- 300 mg  
Milk, lowfat, 8 ounces - 300 mg

- Vitamin D is now 400 IU daily for children from 0-12 months and 600 IU daily for children over 12 months.

**Dental Care:** Your child should brush his teeth at least twice a day. It's always good to check your child's teeth after they brush. Flossing the teeth before bedtime is also recommended. Your child should visit the dentist twice a year. The grooves on the permanent teeth are prone to cavities. Parents and dentists need to watch the teeth carefully and consider whether sealants (plastic coatings

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that adhere to the chewing surface of the molar teeth) may help prevent tooth decay.

## **Safety:**

Should your child need antibiotics for an illness it is medically compatible to administer Tylenol or Motrin while taking antibiotics.

Internet safety: Talk to your child about approved websites and caution them not to give information about themselves. Setting a time limit is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics of two hours or less daily.

Fires: Make sure your family has a home fire escape plan. Make sure to keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen. Tell your child about the dangers of playing with matches or lighters. Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out. Turn your water heater to 120°F (50°C).

Car Safety: Your child should always wear a seat belt in the car. Make sure and uses properly positioned belt-positioning booster seat in the back seat. Everyone in the family should lead by example and always wear their seat belts

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: Always supervise your child when they are crossing the street. Your child may start to look in both directions, but is not ready to cross a street alone. Your child should always wear a helmet when riding a bike. Make sure the helmet is properly fastened. Make sure the size of the bicycle your child rides is appropriate. Your child's feet should both touch the ground when your child stands over the bicycle. The top tube of the bicycle should be at least 2 inches below your child's pelvis. Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near busy roads. All family members should ride with a bicycle helmet as well.

Strangers: Remind your child never to go anywhere with a stranger. Discuss safety outside the home with your child. Be sure your child knows her home address, phone number and the name of her parents' place(s) of work.

Dental Care: Your child should brush his teeth at least twice a day. It's always good to check your child's teeth after they brush. Flossing the teeth before bedtime is also recommended. Your child should visit the dentist twice a year. Permanent teeth may soon come in or may have already started coming in. The grooves on the permanent teeth are prone to cavities. Parents and dentists need to watch the teeth carefully and consider whether sealants (plastic coatings that adhere to the chewing surface of the molar teeth) may help prevent tooth decay.

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**Sleep:** Ensure that your child gets adequate sleep. For children 7-10 years of age, the suggested bedtime is 8-9 p.m.

**Behavior:** Kids at this age may take risks. Although they confidently think they will not get hurt, parents should watch them closely, especially when they are near roadways, open water, or near a fire or electricity. Kids seem to have boundless energy. Prepare in advance for ways to let your child enjoy physical activity. Dawdling is a normal response at this age and demonstrates that a child is having a difficult time planning and thinking through the steps of accomplishing a task.

**Academic Achievement:** Let us know if your child is beginning to have difficulties at school. Attention deficit disorders and Learning Disabilities often become more apparent after a child begins attending elementary school. ADHD may cause excessive fidgetiness, difficulty sustaining attention as well as other symptoms we may discuss. A learning disability can decrease a child's school performance even if the child seems to be bright. If there is persistent refusal to go to school sometimes along with multiple physical complaints like headache, stomach aches, dizziness and fatigue which improve later in the day, this may indicate reason for evaluation. Sometimes, separation anxiety can be more amplified than in most children. This often responds to some behavioral changes and counseling/reassurance from parents.

## **Suggested Reading for Parents:**

*Caring for Your School Age Child: Ages 5-12*, Edward L. Schor

*How to Discipline Your Six To Twelve Year Old Without Losing Your Mind*, Jerry L Wyckoff, Barbara C Unell

*When Your Child Is 6-12*, John M Drescher

*1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12* , Thomas W. Phelan PhD