

Pediatric Health Care

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Your Child at Six Years

Your next visit is at: Seven Years

Immunizations: Your child may already be current on all routinely recommended vaccinations. Influenza vaccine may be recommended depending on your child's health.

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) and blood pressure. If there is a family history of elevated cholesterol, some physicians will also obtain a screening blood test.

Development:

Gross Motor: Your child is still improving basic motor skills and coordination; they love active play but may tire easily. They may begin to learn some specific sports skills like batting a ball, throwing, catching, kicking or bouncing a ball 4-6 times, skating and riding a bicycle.

Fine Motor: Draws a diamond, writes first and last name and writes numbers up to 10. Your child may start to create and write short sentences, form letters with down-going and counterclockwise strokes; draw a person with 6 body parts. Your child may also start learning to tie their shoes.

Language: Your child should have about a 10,000 word vocabulary, they may start asking what unfamiliar words mean, can tell which words do not belong in groups, repeats 8-10 word sentences, describes events in order, knows days of the week.

Social/cognitive development: Your child will start having "best friends" of the same sex, they may also start wanting to be and act like their friends. They enjoy school, but they may have some difficulty cooperating with other children or considering the feelings of others. They value independence, begin to impose rules on play activities; they will be able to distinguish fantasy from reality. Your child will ask endless, "how, what, where, why" questions and continue to refine concepts of shape, space, time, color and numbers.

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.

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

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 600 IU daily for children over 12 months.

Tooth Care and Tooth Brushing

It is recommended to clean your child's teeth twice a day. Parents must supervise and do the brushing before or after your child until your child is 8 years old or has the manual dexterity to be able to tie their own shoelaces. We recommend that the toothpaste amount be limited to a smear or the size of a grain of rice until 3 years old or a small pea sized amount after 3 years old in case of accidental swallowing of the toothpaste. The use of any toothpaste at all between the age that teeth erupt and 2 years old is currently debated by different health agencies, but limiting it should keep the risk of having too much fluoride down. Your first dental visit should be by two years old if there is no significant family history of dental problems or by 1 if there is such a history. The American Dental Association recommends a first dental visit by 1 year old if you desire.

Safety:

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).

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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.

Sleep: Ensure that your 6-year-old child gets adequate sleep. For children 6-10 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.

Suggested Reading for Parents:

Understanding 6-7 Year-olds: Understanding Six-seven-year-olds (Understanding Your Child Series), Corinne Aves

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Your Six-Year-Old: Loving and Defiant, Louise Bates Ames and Frances L. Ilg

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