

Pediatric Health Care

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Your Child at Four Years

Immunizations: Two vaccines will be administered at today's visit.

1. Diphtheria- Tetanus- acellular Pertussis (DTaP), Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) 2. MMR and Varicella vaccine. We will also do a hearing test.

Your child should receive the MMR and Varicella vaccine. Some children may run a fever, develop a mild pink rash or become irritable after they receive these vaccines about 2 weeks after these live weakened virus vaccines. Your child may also have a few chicken pox at the site of the injection. These are normal reactions. They may not be allowed to have contact with people who are immunosuppressed (such as at certain points during chemotherapy) within a few weeks after receiving the immunizations. They may also have some soreness, redness and swelling in the area where the shot was given. You can give your child Tylenol or Motrin for any discomfort or fever after vaccinations, but it is no longer recommended to give it routinely. If you think your child may be having a reaction to an immunization, please call the office.

Development:

Gross Motor: Your child's motor skills are improving, but are still not very accurate or coordinated. Your child can probably walk down stairs alternating feet and skip. Many children and this age will enjoy riding a 3-wheeler and climbing on a jungle gym.

Fine Motor: Continue to encourage activities such as drawing and painting, balls and blocks that require imagination. Fine motor skills will continue to improve.

Language: Your child will have large increases in vocabulary and improvement in grammar. He/she may "read" stories by describing the pictures.

Social/Cognitive Development: At this age children still have magical thinking and sees things only from his/her point of view, though the child has an increased ability to reason. You may notice that children begin to prefer playing with other children of their own sex. Their ability to play with others is developing and you can encourage this by organizing play-dates or other activities where your child can play with peers.

Nutrition:

Continue to offer healthy foods from a variety of food groups. Picky eating may continue but you can offer foods that were disliked before and may get a different response. Sometimes a child will need food to be offered eight different

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occasions or more before accepting. Avoid struggles over eating. Limit fruit juice to no more than four ounces a day.

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:

Accident risk increases when stress rises within families, including both minor and major stressors, happy and sad stressors. Examples include, hunger or fatigue, in parent or child, traveling, moving, pregnancy, birth of a sibling, acute illness, work stress in one parent or relationship strain between parents and switching child care situations.

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Your child's increased motor skills will lead to more independence and more climbing...which increases the risk for falls. Guards on windows above the first floor, gates on stairways, and not leaving your child unattended can help prevent falls. Also, continue to make sure televisions, bookcases and tall dressers are secured to the wall. Cords for blinds should be kept out of reach.

Poisoning: Your active child can now climb anywhere and open any drawer or cabinet that isn't safety latched, and open some that are latched! Store all necessary household products and medicines safety-capped and behind child proof cabinets. Discard any potential toxins that you don't need. If your child does get into a toxic substance, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Keep this phone number handy with other emergency numbers.

Burns: The kitchen is a dangerous place for your child during meal preparation. Hot liquids, food and grease can cause serious burns. Kitchen appliances and other hot surfaces stay hot and can cause burns long after you have turned them off. Reduce hot water heater temperature to 120 degrees F or lower. Prevent electrical burns: hide electrical cords out of reach behind furniture. Cover unused electrical outlets with child-proof protectors. Beware of burns from chewing on cords or poking fingers into outlets. If burned, apply cold water (not ice) immediately, then cover loosely with bandage or clean cloth. Call us for all burns, including blistering sunburns.

Drowning: Knowing how to "swim" does not make a child water safe at this age. Never leave your child alone while in water- even for a moment. Be attentive even in pools where a lifeguard is present. Most pool drownings occur when there is an adult present and a child has slipped away for a few minutes.

Car crashes are still the biggest danger. Use the proper safety seat every time your child is in the car.

Do not allow your child to play in the street or driveway. Always use helmets for bikes, scooters, skateboards, and roller blades. No bikes in the street. Use elbow guards and knee pads for all these activities. Use wrist guards when riding skateboards and roller blades.

Always keep child out of yard when lawn mower is in use.

Beware of small parts of toys and other small objects that could cause choking. Check toys frequently for broken or loose parts. Plastic bags, ribbons, and wrappers or balloons can cause suffocation.

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Store unloaded guns in locked containers out of children's reach. Lock ammunition away from firearms. Use safety locks. Insure that other people you and your child visit do the same.

Discipline

Suggested techniques for dealing with an inappropriate behavior include: show mild annoyance, ignore minor offenses, or teach what you want your child to do. Explain the logical consequences ("because it took so long for you to clean up, we only have time for a very short story"). When your child misbehaves, help him/her to correct the situation (for example, cleaning up an intentional spill or comforting someone whose feelings have been hurt).

Give your child choices when possible. Praise good deeds.

Be a good role model in dealing with mistakes and frustrations. Avoid yelling and spanking.

Use "time out" generally as a last resort (take the child out of the situation, sitting in a corner of his/her room). Explain to the child why you are using the time out. Time out should last about one minute for each year of age. Don't overuse time outs.

Other Issues:

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

Teeth: Child will imitate brushing but parent should also brush child's teeth at least twice daily until age seven to insure adequate hygiene. Continue to see the dentist twice a year.

Curiosity about body parts is normal. Provide correct words for genitals. Masturbation is common. Let your child know that this is a private activity that should take place only in his/her own bedroom. Be manner-of-fact about this with your child. Teach your child that no one is allowed to touch his/her genitals and that if it occurs he/she should tell you right away.

Stuttering and other speech problems commonly occur up to age 4 ½ years and usually resolve on their own within six months of appearing. Ask your provider if you have any concerns about your child's speech patterns.

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Limit TV to one hour or less each day of age-appropriate shows, preferably ones without commercials (young children can't distinguish commercials from the show itself). Watch along with your child and talk together about what you are watching. Since your child's imagination is becoming more active, he or she may be more sensitive to what is viewed.

Play and Toys

Read to your child daily! Visit places such as libraries for books, videos and music. Many libraries have special story times for even very young children. Other favorite toys at this age are crayons, simple puzzles, and wooden blocks.

Take your child to parks and playgrounds where he/she can climb, swing, play in a sandbox, and interact with other children. It's also a great way to meet other parents.

Suggested Reading for Parents:

Raising your Spirited Child: A guide for parents whose child is more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent and energetic, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka

Positive Discipline A-Z: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems, Jane Nelson, Lynn Scott and Stephen Glenn

Without Spanking or Spoiling, Elizabeth Crary

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5, Stephen P. Shelov, The American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998

How to talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk, Adele Faber, et al., Avon Books, October 1999

Your Child's Health: The Parents' Guide to Symptoms, Emergencies, Common Illnesses, Behavior and School Problems, Barton D. Schmitt