

PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES OF SPRINGFIELD, INC

1000 E. Primrose, Suite 560, Springfield, MO 65807 (417) 882-1600

FOUR AND FIVE-YEAR CHECK-UPS

DIET: Offering small portions with the option of second servings encourages eating when hungry rather than until food is gone. Other good habits include avoiding eating while watching television, encouraging pleasant mealtime conversation, and building awareness of food groups and serving sizes (half a cup for many foods at this age). At school age, children should increase their dairy servings to three-four a day.

If anyone in your extended family has high cholesterol or has suffered early heart attack or stroke, please notify your provider. It is not too soon to consider cardiac risk factors in children.

Fluoride supplementation should continue until age 12 if the home water supply is not fluoridated or no fluoride program is offered at school. Fluoride doses increase at age 6 so ask your pharmacist to e-mail us for a new prescription at that time. Dental visits should be scheduled regularly at this age.

DEVELOPMENT: The typical four-year-old can climb a ladder, walk on tiptoe, control a pencil, cut and paste, count to five, sing songs, enjoy jokes, carry on a conversation, ask many questions, draw a person with two or three body parts, copy a cross and circle, enjoy dramatic make-believe, and play cooperatively.

A five-year-old skips, identifies coins, tells a simple story, copies a triangle, recognizes most letters of the alphabet and draws a person with a head, body, arms, and legs. He is also learning to understand right from wrong and follows rules closely. She can accept and keep an agreement. He will enjoy chores like setting the table or pouring a bowl of dry cereal. Board and card games are fun now. Encourage pretend play mixed with “real” things. Reading continues to be one of the most important things you can share with your child.

Encourage privacy when dressing and bathing. Discipline and reprimands are best offered privately. Clearly state limits and consequences. Avoid nagging or meaningless threats. Praise good behavior and limit criticism.

Repeated criticism is less effective than setting limits, teaching by example and gentle guidance. When it is necessary to criticize, criticize the behavior, not the child. Give simple choices and don't forget to listen to your child.

School age children should limit TV, video, and computer time to no more than one hour a day. Content should be monitored closely by an adult. Avoid TV at mealtimes and bedtime. We do not recommend having a television in your child's bedroom. Regular physical activity is a good balance for screen time.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS: A child is socially ready for school when she plays well with others, takes turns, follows directions, conforms to simple rules regarding behavior, dresses herself, and is able to separate from home for a day. Academic readiness may depend on the type of kindergarten program being considered. The first semester of kindergarten may be socially stressful and temporarily keeping after-school lessons to a minimum may help.

SLEEP: Many children are now able to control their bladders all night. If your child has never been dry at night and has good daytime control, you can expect nighttime dryness to develop over the next several years. If your child is not dry at night but has been in the past or is not dry during the day, please call our office.

ILLNESS: Seasonal allergies with sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes and nighttime cough often begin at 3-7 years of age. If you suspect your child is suffering from allergies but is otherwise well, try to control symptoms by avoiding the cause. Over-the-counter products such as Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra and Naphcon A are safe and effective for children. If your child's symptoms are affecting his sleep and schoolwork despite your efforts, please schedule an appointment with your provider.

Strep throat and head lice are common problems among school age children. Good hand washing and not sharing food and utensils can help prevent strep throat. Fever and sore throat, particularly when accompanied by vomiting, rash, headache, stomachache and swollen glands, warrant an appointment. However, hoarseness, cough and runny nose usually indicate a viral illness. Not sharing hats and hairbrushes, as well as hanging coats on separate hooks in the classroom may minimize exposure to lice. Heavy conditioner left on hair overnight once a week may help decrease the frequency of lice

infestations. For more information, see the links on the Parent Resources tab of this website or call our office.

Regular exposure to cigarette smoke is harmful. The American Cancer Society can provide information on stop-smoking programs.

When planning a trip away from your child, please leave a letter with his caregiver including medical conditions, past surgeries, current medications, allergies and immunizations as well as a copy of the insurance card.

SAFETY: Booster seats are recommended until your child is 57 inches tall. The rear seat is the safest position. Seats with front airbags should be avoided until age 13.

Continue swimming lessons and water safety discussions with your children at this age. Our area has many indoor pools that provide year-round opportunities for lessons and practice.

Talk to children about refusing touching they don't like. Emphasize that she can tell you and her healthcare provider about any uneasy situation. Too much emphasis on "strangers" can lead to the misconception that a "stranger" is an easily identifiable "bad guy" or "monster". Many times, an abuser or abductor is familiar to the child. Consider a family password that the child should expect to hear whenever there is a change in plans, such as a neighbor picking up your child when you have an emergency. Learning his name, address, and phone number will help your child if there is an emergency or he is lost.

Discuss and practice a fire exit plan and "stop-drop-roll" in your home. Keep matches and lighters out-of-reach. Discuss their hazards openly. Supervise children near the street and driveway. Approved bike helmets are recommended every time your child uses a bike or scooter. Be a good role model! Pay extra attention to fitting the helmet properly as your child grows. Discuss water safety at home and continue swimming lessons. Use SPF 30 sunscreen and reapply it every 2 hours.

Warn your child to avoid all animals, wild or tame, unless their owner and you give permission. Discuss safe storage of guns and ammunition with the adults in your home and in any home your child visits. Your child must

learn never to touch any gun without your permission. He should learn to leave and find an adult whenever another child has a gun.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Booster doses of acellular DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus), MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), VZV (chickenpox) and IPV (polio) are due now. This dose of the whooping cough vaccine may cause significant swelling and redness at the injection site and while it may look impressive, it is not usually serious or painful. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen should help with any side effects. Dosage charts are found under the Parent Resources tab of this website. If your child has received vaccines elsewhere, please fax or bring in a copy for our records.

OFFICE CALLS: When calling for advice, please have your questions organized with a pencil and paper handy. If the child is ill, please take his temperature before calling (no need to add a degree). Routine calls should be made during regular weekday office hours. Emergency calls may be placed through the office number when we are not in the office. When your child starts school, please consider if you want to add the school nurse (or later, the team trainer) to your Shared Information Form found on this website so that we may talk with them about your child's healthcare.

APPOINTMENTS: Preventive care visits (well child check-ups) are an essential part of your child's health. These are an opportunity to discuss changes and concerns about diet, sleep, developing skills, safety, and immunization issues. Check-ups should be scheduled each year. Sports and camp physicals, such as Mighty Mites and Scouts, may be combined with well child check-ups with a little planning. Please see the Appointments page of this website for details on scheduling well and sick visits.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Office (417) 882-1600

After hours (877) 599-8962

Fax (417) 631-0119

Poison Control Center (800) 392-9111