



YOU FIRST

What To Expect at a Visit with the Pediatrician

You and your child's doctor want the same thing for your child: the best care! Please keep these tips in mind:

1. Go to the appointment.

Being at the doctor during your child's visit is important. Sometimes, family or friends can step in when you can't and that is OK! But talking with the doctor in person about how your child is doing is the best way to understand your child's health and possible treatments if needed. As your child gets older, they should also take part in the discussion.

2. Talk to your child about what to expect during the visit.

Many children do better when they know what's going on. Sometimes, children cry during their check-up because they are worried about what's happening. Try to prepare your child by reading him/her books about going to the doctor or letting them play with "doctor" toys. If you want to talk about something that may upset your child – such as bullying, bedwetting or picky eating – ask if it's possible to have your child wait with an office staff while you speak with the doctor.

3. Ask questions at the start of the visit.

Make a list of all your questions, and ask them as soon as the visit begins. Ask the questions that concern you the most first. Don't be embarrassed to ask – all questions are valid. Write down what the doctor tells you, because you might forget details when you leave the office.

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4. Keep your child's primary care doctor in the loop.

Make sure your primary care doctor knows about all visits to specialists, emergency rooms or urgent care centers. After a visit with a specialist, ask that a report of the visit be sent to your child's primary care doctor. When filling out any forms, be sure to give your doctor's name and phone number. Also, let your doctor know about any medicine that was prescribed during other visits.

5. Discuss with your child's doctor any information you found on the Internet.

Be aware that information on the Internet may not always be right. Get your information from reliable sources, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org), KidsHealth (www.kidshealth.org) or the Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.org).

6. Keep your child busy during the visit.

Sometimes there is a wait to see the doctor. Try to bring toys, books or games to entertain your child. The distraction will also make your child feel more relaxed about being at the doctor's.

Remember, your child's wellbeing starts with you! Regular check-ups and a good relationship with your child's doctor are important for your child's health.

SOURCES:

- Parents Magazine. "Make the Most of Your Child's Checkup": www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/make-the-most-of-your-childs-checkup/
- https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF_Family_Tipsheet.pdf
- Center for Parenting Education. "A prescription from a pediatrician: how to get the most out of your pediatrician visits": <http://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/baby-through-preschool-articles>

Staying Active During Colder Months

With temperatures dropping, you may be spending more time at home with the kids. Here are some indoor activities you and your family can do to keep active:

Pillow fight! Get the pillows out, put the table lamps away and have some fun! Here's a chance to be silly and burn some energy, even in a smaller apartment.

- Build a fort. Maybe this is what you do before the pillow fight! Use chairs, tables, couch cushions and sheets to build your fort. Maybe even spend the night in there!
- Twister. It's not a new game, but kids of all ages can play and have fun.
- Learn dance moves. There are tons of fun dances on TikTok and YouTube. Have a dance-off if you're feeling competitive.
- Activity bag. Write different physical activities on bits of paper and put them in a bowl. It could be jumping jacks, or a yoga pose, a dance move. Pass the bowl around – whatever activity you pull out you must do. For extra fun, add a time limit.
- Have an active story time: Instead of just reading a book to your kids, have them act out what's happening in the story.
- Just because it's cold doesn't mean you can't go outside and have fun. Why not:
 - Visit the beach! The water may be cold, but you can collect shells or build sand castles.
 - Take a brisk walk in the park.
 - Get some colored chalk, draw a hopscotch board on the sidewalk and invite passersby to play with you and the kids.



Check the following sites for other suggestions: Gonoodle.com • Todaysparent.com • runwildmychild.com



A Healthy Mouth Is a Happy Mouth

Did you know that cavities are the most common infection among children in the United States?

Cavities, also called tooth decay, cause pain and may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and even learning. The good news is that you can help prevent tooth decay by taking good care of your child's mouth and teeth (called oral health).

What is tooth decay?

Teeth are covered with a coating called enamel. When bacteria in a child's mouth mix with the sugar in food and drinks, they can create holes in the teeth. These holes in the enamel are called cavities. By 2 years old, 1 out of 10 children in the United States have cavities. By age 5, nearly half of all children have one or more cavities.

Why do we have to take care of baby teeth?

Baby teeth are important because they save space for the permanent teeth that come in later. Baby teeth also help your child chew and speak properly. Starting good oral habits at a very young age helps prevent dental problems later on.

Tooth brushing tips for all ages:

Birth to 12 months:

- Clean your baby's gums after feedings with a clean washcloth or a baby toothbrush.
- Take your baby to the dentist before their first birthday.

12- 24 months:

- Brush your child's teeth two times a day.
- Use water and a baby toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Limit juice or other sugary drinks to a small cup at mealtimes.
- If your child hasn't been to the dentist yet, schedule a check-up now.

24 months:

- Continue to help your child brush two times a day.
- Teach them how to brush their teeth on their own, and watch to make sure they do it correctly.
- Use a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Teach your child not to swallow the toothpaste.

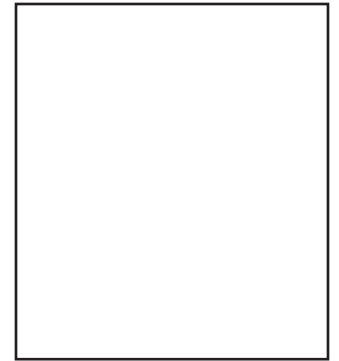
Cavity Prevention

- Don't put your child to bed with a bottle or food.
- Give your child fruits or vegetables as snacks. Limit sweets, like candy, chips or cookies.
- Put water or milk in your child's bottle or sippy cup instead of juice, soda or lemonade. These have a lot of sugar and can cause cavities.
- Teach your child to drink from a regular cup as soon as they're ready, typically around age 2.
- Do not share toothbrushes. Your child may catch germs from someone else's brush that could make them sick.

To learn more, visit the American Dental Association's website at <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/>.

SOURCE:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, healthychildren.org, Oral Health: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/default.aspx>
- American Dental Association, Mouth Healthy: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/>



Get Your Flu Shot!

Peak flu season is here, and it's time to get a flu shot. Protect yourself and your family from getting sick! Flu shots are different than the vaccines against COVID-19 and guard against different viruses. It is important to receive both vaccines.

Here's what you need to know about the flu vaccine:

- The very best way to prevent the flu is to get a yearly shot.
- The flu shot is free with insurance and available at many local pharmacies, as well as at your doctor's office.
- Everyone 6 months and older should get the flu shot every year.
- People who take care of infants 6 months and younger should get a flu shot. The flu in infants can be very serious.

There are people who are more likely to get very sick if they get the flu.

These people (and those taking care of them) should get the shot. They include:

- Young children and infants • Pregnant women • People over 65 years old
- People with health problems like diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, asthma

Even if you've had a flu shot, you can help stop the spread by:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water.
- Not touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Staying home if you are sick.

SOURCES: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season.htm>



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