Well Child Care at 5 Years

Nutrition
Eating meals together as a family has many benefits. Mealtime is a great time to let your child tell you about her interests, concerns, and worries. Encourage your child to talk and to listen to others as they share stories and experiences. This helps keep your family feeling close and connected. Children who have meals with their families are less likely to smoke, drink, and abuse drugs, and more likely to do well in school.

You can model healthy eating by what you eat and how much you eat. Your child should eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Your child should have at least 2 cups of low-fat milk or other dairy products each day. Limit sugary foods and high-fat snacks.

Development
Children at this age are imaginative, get along well with friends their own age, and have lots of energy. Be sure to praise children when they share things with each other.

Some children still wet the bed at night. If your child wets the bed regularly, ask your child's healthcare provider about ways to help your child.

Five-year-olds usually are able to dress and undress themselves, understand rules in a game, and brush their own teeth. Your child may enjoy helping to choose and prepare the family meals with supervision.

Read to your child every day. Make reading a part of the evening ritual. Limit use of the TV, DVDs, or computer to 1 or 2 hours a day of high-quality children's programming. Participate with your child and discuss the content with her. Do not let your child watch shows with violence or sexual behaviors. For the rest of the time, encourage other activities, like reading, hobbies, and physical activity. Don't put a TV in your child's bedroom. Having a TV, computer, or video game in your child's bedroom increases your child's risk for obesity, sleep disorders, and attention problems.

Behavior Control
For behaviors that you would like to encourage in your child, try to catch your child being good. Tell your child how proud you are when she does things that help you or others.

Find ways to reduce dangerous or hurtful behaviors. Also teach your child to apologize. Try time-outs by sending your child to a quiet, boring corner without anything to do for 5 minutes when she misbehaves. Do not send your child to their room. A bedroom should not feel like a place of punishment.

Talk to your child’s healthcare provider if you need help with behavior problems.
**Dental Care**

You can help care for your child’s teeth by following these tips:

- Avoid sugary foods to help prevent cavities.
- Make sure that your child brushes his teeth after meals and flosses once a day. Check your child’s teeth after she has brushed.
- Your child should see a dentist every 6 months or as often as the dentist recommends.

**Safety Tips**

Accidents are the number-one cause of serious injury and death in children. Keep your child away from knives, power tools, or mowers.

**Falls**

- Never allow your child to climb on chairs, ladders, or cabinets.
- Do not allow your child to play on stairways.
- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.

**Car Safety**

- Make sure that your child is buckled into an approved car safety seat. Children under 13 should always ride in the back seat.
- Never leave children alone in a parked car, even for a few minutes. Children are at risk for heat illness and injury when left alone. Always check to make sure your child is not still in the car when you leave your car.

**Traffic and Bicycle Safety**

- Don't let your child cross the street by herself. Your child may start to look in both directions but don't depend on her ability to cross a street alone.
- If your child has a bicycle, make sure that it fits your child. Have your child stand over the bicycle. There should be 1 to 2 inches between your child and the top bar of a road bike, and 3 to 4 inches for a mountain bike.
- Your child and all family members should always wear a bicycle helmet, even when riding a tricycle.
- Do not let your child ride a bicycle near traffic. Use bike paths.

**Water Safety**

- Watch children and never leave them alone around water, including wading pools, swimming pools, spas or hot tubs, ponds, lakes, streams, or any other open water. If a child is in the water, an adult should also be in the water close enough to reach and grab the child if needed. Children who have completed swimming programs are still not safe from drowning.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends swimming lessons for children over 4 years of age.

**Poisoning**

- Teach your child to take medicines only with supervision and not to eat unknown substances.
- Buy medicines in containers with safety caps.
- Do not store poisons in drink bottles, glasses, or jars.
- Put the poison center number on all phones.

**Strangers**

- Discuss safety outside the home with your child.
- Teach your child her address and phone number and how to contact you at work.
- Teach your child never to take anything or go anywhere with a stranger.
- Teach your child that no adult should tell your child to keep secrets from parents, no adult should show interest in private parts, and no adult should ask your child for help with private parts.

**Fires and Burns**

- Teach your child to never play with matches or lighters.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (49°C) or lower.
• Install smoke detectors. Check your smoke detectors as often as recommended by the manufacturer or at least once a month to make sure they work. For all detectors that use batteries, replace batteries at least once a year or when they are low.
• Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if there is a fire.
• Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

Smoking
• Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections, like colds, flu, and throat infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
• If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Ask your healthcare provider for help in quitting. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house, car, or near children. It helps keep your child healthy and sets a good example.

Immunizations
Immunizations protect your child against several serious, life-threatening diseases. Your child should get a flu shot every year. Your child’s healthcare provider will let you know if your child is up to date on all recommended vaccinations. Bring your child’s shot record to all visits with your provider.

Next Visit
A routine checkup every year is recommended.