

Get up-to-date on immunizations

It's not too late to catch up if your child has missed any immunizations. Bring his Lifetime Immunization Record card to every visit. If your child has received all the recommended vaccines, he will be up-to-date for child care or preschool. By age 3½, most children will have had:

- 3 doses of Hepatitis B (HepB)
- 4 doses of Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP)
- 3 – 4 doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- 4 doses of Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)
- 3 doses of Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV)
- 1 dose of Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- 1 dose of Varicella (chickenpox)
- 2 doses of Hepatitis A (HepA)
- Influenza (flu), yearly

Some children with high-risk medical conditions may also need meningococcal and pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV) vaccines. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about any vaccines or the recommended schedule.

Help your child eat well

Your job is to provide your child a variety of healthy foods. Your child's job is to choose how much of those foods to eat.

- Offer healthy snacks in the morning and afternoon. Apples, blueberries, cheese, crackers, tortillas and small pieces of vegetables are good choices.
- Provide at least one cup of vegetables and one cup of fruits each day.
- Offer water when your child is thirsty between meals and snacks. Limit fruit juice. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 4 to 6 ounces (½ - ¾ cup) per day of 100% juice.
- Avoid sodas and sweet drinks. They spoil her appetite for healthy foods and harm her teeth.

Calcium and vitamin D are important

Calcium and vitamin D help build healthy bones and teeth. Four servings of milk, cheese or yogurt each day give your child enough calcium. A serving is one slice of cheese or ½ cup of lowfat milk or yogurt. Other good sources are well-cooked tofu made with calcium sulfate and calcium-fortified soy milk or orange juice.

Vitamin D helps your child's body use calcium in foods more easily. Very few foods contain vitamin D naturally. This means that your child probably doesn't get enough vitamin D each day from food. The AAP recommends that all infants and children get 400 IU of vitamin D a day. Talk to your doctor or nurse about whether your child needs a vitamin D supplement.

Growth spurts

It is normal for children to grow faster in some months than others. During growth spurts your child will probably eat more than at other times. Most children get taller and thinner, and gain weight more slowly at this age. If you wonder whether your child weighs too much or too little, or see changes in your child that worry you, talk to your doctor, nurse or registered dietitian (nutritionist).

Avoid comforting your child with food

There are many reasons why your child may get unhappy or upset, other than being hungry. If he has eaten a meal or snack recently, think about other things that may be bothering him. He may be bored, tired, sick, or want your attention. Try these ideas instead of food:

- Snuggle up with each other and talk or read a book.
- Go for a walk together.
- Turn on some music and dance. Be silly together!

Offering food or drink first, may teach your child to use food to try to feel better which may lead to a habit of over-eating.

Family Health Hotline
1.800.322.2588
711 (TTY relay)

Programs of WithinReach

www.ParentHelp123.org



- Immunization information
- Child care referral agencies
- Affordable health insurance
- Food and nutrition assistance
- Prenatal resources
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- Free screenings for developmental concerns

Call the Family Health Hotline with questions about your CHILD Profile mailings.

Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Children learn and develop at their own rate

Most children this age can:

- Hold a crayon between thumb and fingers.
- Kick and throw a ball.
- Understand simple directions.

By now, people outside your family should be able to understand what your child is saying at least half the time. If you have questions about your child's development or speech, talk with your doctor or nurse. You can also call your local school district or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to find out about a free screening.

Talk with your child

Talking together is one of the best activities for you and your child. "Why?" is probably one of your child's favorite words now. She thinks you know everything! You may get tired of answering the same questions over and over, but taking time to talk with her is very important. Listening to her ideas and stories can tell you what she is thinking and understanding. Knowing that you listen when she talks to you may make it easier for her to come to you with problems as she gets older.

Stay involved with preschool and child care

If your child is going to preschool, staying involved will help make sure he has a good experience.

- Meet regularly with your child's teachers and ask questions about how he is doing.
- Offer to volunteer.
- Join in on special events like field trips and holidays.

Pretend play is part of learning

When your child plays "make-believe" she learns many things. She begins to learn how to care about other people when she pretends to be someone else. When she makes up stories, she learns how to be creative. She even learns how to handle her feelings and solve problems.



Fire safety

Your family should have a plan to be sure that everyone gets out of the house in case of a fire. There should be two ways out of every room. Make sure your child knows what your smoke alarm sounds like. Visit the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org for more information.

Protect your child in or near water

A child can drown quickly and silently in a tub, pool, river, lake, canal, or the ocean. Swimming and water safety are important skills for all children to learn. Your child may be ready to start learning how to swim. **But even if she has had lessons, she is not old enough to be around water unless an adult is within arm's length every minute!**

Put a life jacket on your child whenever she is near or on the water. Use a Coast Guard-approved Type II life jacket. Choose one that is made for your child's weight. It should have a strap between the legs. Adjust the straps to fit her snugly. State law requires children under age 13 to wear life jackets in boats shorter than 19 feet long.



Lock up things that could poison your child

Poisons can look like food or drinks. Teach your child to ask an adult before he eats or drinks anything you haven't given him.

- Store medicines, vitamins and household products in their original containers and where your child cannot see or reach them.
- Do not store cleaning products, paint or gasoline in used pop, juice or milk containers.

If you think your child has been poisoned, stay calm and call the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Call 911 if your child has collapsed, stopped breathing or is having trouble breathing, or will not wake up.

Protect your child at home

Your child may seem very grown up now but he does not understand danger or how he could hurt himself or others. Keep your home safe and continue to watch him carefully.

- Purses, backpacks, briefcases: These often have pills, cough drops, nail files, make-up, pocket knives and lighters in them. Keep them out of reach.
- Heaters, fireplaces, stoves, grills, campfires: Keep screens in front of the fireplace and space heaters. Don't allow him to help cook at the stove. When you cook food outside, keep him away from the grill or fire.
- Bathroom: Remember, 3½-year-olds still need to be supervised in the bathtub. A non-skid mat in the tub can help prevent falls.

Checkup time

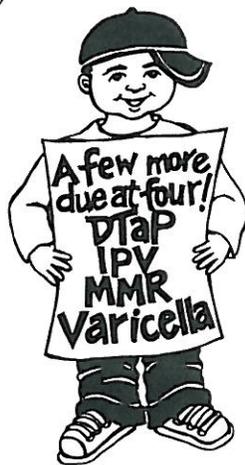
Yearly medical and dental checkups are the best way to make sure your child is healthy and developing well. Before the checkup, write down any questions or concerns you have, then take the list with you. For a free developmental screening, call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or your local school district.

Booster shots - a reminder for the body

Vaccines help your child's body fight diseases if he comes into contact with the germs that cause them. More than one dose of the same vaccine may be needed to build up the best protection against certain diseases, like pertussis (whooping cough). "Booster" doses of some vaccines are needed throughout life to maintain protection. On or after your child's 4th birthday, he will need another dose of:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP)
- Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

If your child has not already received vaccines for Hepatitis A and B or his yearly flu vaccine, ask your doctor or nurse about them at his next visit.



How about YOUR immunizations?

Vaccine-preventable diseases are often spread from adults or older children to younger children.

- Have you had a Tdap shot to protect yourself from pertussis and tetanus?
- Do you get your flu vaccine every year?
- Do you know if you are immune to measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox? Have you had

these diseases or do you have a record of receiving these vaccines?

- If your child attends a child care or preschool, what is their policy on staff immunizations? Are all other children immunized?

Protecting your child is everyone's concern. Ask your doctor, nurse or clinic if your immunizations are up-to-date. Everyone who spends time with your child should make sure their immunizations are up-to-date.

Help your child get ready for kindergarten

By the time your child is four years old, you may be thinking about what you can do to get him ready for kindergarten. Many of the things you do every day are helping him get ready.

- Talk with him about things he is interested in.
- Read a story to your child and talk about how it could have had a different ending.
- Look at family pictures and talk about them.
- Help your child learn how to solve problems that come up when he is playing with his friends.
- Help him learn how to write his name.

Help your child express feelings

Your four-year-old may have very strong feelings that worry and surprise you. These feelings are normal. Children are learning to express **all** their feelings and they need your help.

- Help him use words to tell you what he feels, whether he is happy, sad, excited, or afraid.
- Take the time to stop and listen to your child.
- Find books about feelings at the library to read together.

It may be easier for your child to come to you with problems as he gets older if he knows you try to understand how he feels.

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Keeping Your Child Healthy

Fitness and your four-year-old

If your child enjoys being active now, she is more likely to be active all her life. Staying fit can help lower the risk for serious health problems like heart disease, diabetes and stroke later in life. It can also help self-esteem. Be active as a family and set a great example for your child!

- Go for a walk or bike ride after dinner.
- Turn on your favorite music and dance together.
- Limit "screen time" (TV, videos and computers) to no more than two hours a day.

Eating together as a family is a good habit

Sitting down to eat together at least once a day is a good habit to get into when your child is young. Studies show that teens who eat dinner with their family five or more times a week are less likely to:

- start smoking, drinking or taking drugs
- feel high levels of stress
- have unhealthy eating habits (skipping meals, using diet pills, anorexia)

And teens who have dinner with their families five or more times a week are twice as likely to get A's in school!

Children are curious about their bodies

Your child may start to ask questions about his or her body. When you are asked, give simple, honest answers. It is important to teach the correct names of all body parts.

It is normal for young children to look at and touch their genitals (private parts). They also may be curious about other children's genitals. Check on children while they are playing. If they are talking about or exploring each others' bodies, calmly help them find other things to do.

Teach your child where it is okay to take off clothing and touch his or her genitals. The bathroom and bedroom would be such places. Also teach when it is okay for other people to touch his or her genitals. Examples would be a doctor's exam or a parent helping to clean up after using the toilet.

Touching and exploring are normal, but parents may have questions or concerns about sexual abuse. Signs may include changes in mood, behavior and/or physical symptoms, like genital bruises, bleeding or infections. If you see these physical symptoms, take your child to the doctor or hospital emergency room right away. Parents should also be concerned about a child who knows things about sex that only a grown-up should know, or who is sexually aggressive. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Keeping Your Child Safe

Safety in cars

Everyone who rides with you must use a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt that fits properly. Washington State law requires that children ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall. Booster seats should be used with **both** a lap and shoulder belt, not just a lap belt.

As your child gets older, he is likely to ride with other parents or caregivers. Make sure they buckle him into his car seat or booster seat correctly.

Washington State law also says that children younger than 13 must sit in the back seat. If your vehicle does not have a back seat, slide the front seat all the way back and, if possible, turn off the air bag.

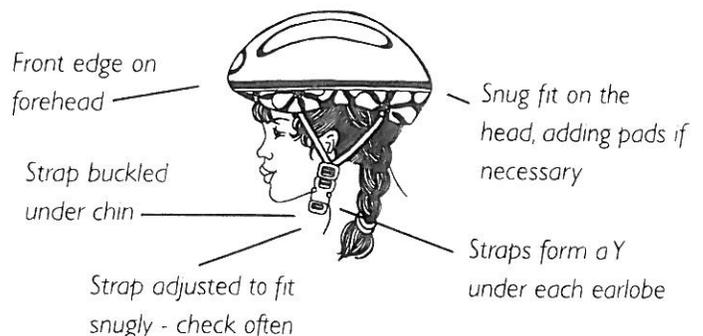
Questions about air bags or lap and shoulder belts?
Call the **Safety Restraint Coalition** at
1-800-BUCK-L-UP (282-5587)
or visit www.800buckleup.org

A helmet protects your child's brain!

A helmet can protect your child from serious brain injury when using tricycles, bikes, skates, scooters and when skiing and horse-back riding. If your child doesn't already have a helmet, get her one now. Check to make sure it fits correctly. Make sure your child knows you expect her to use her helmet every time she rides. Set a good example by using yours.

Take the helmet off before your child plays on playground equipment. A helmet can get caught in the equipment and cause serious injury.

Correct Helmet Use



Buy a helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or Snell standards. Don't use second-hand helmets. They may not be safe. Contact the CPSC at 1-800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov/kids/kidsafety/correct.html for information.

For the Health of All Our Children

CHILD Profile is a service of the Washington State Department of Health

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