

# **Healthy Kids**

## **5 YEARS**

### **WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO**

At this age your child can probably:

Can dress and undress himself...

Can count to ten or more...

Better understands the concept of time...

Likes to wash & personally care for himself...

Sometimes he is demanding...

Sometimes eagerly cooperative...

May still need a nap at the end of the day...

May wet the bed at night...

Likes to shock adults with bathroom language...

May have eye-hand coordination problems...

Far-sightedness is common

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD**

Let her care for herself. Offer suggestions about her clothes, but let her make the final choice.

Make sure your child has a regular sleep schedule. Let her nap when she needs it.

Many children still wet the bed at age 5. Most children overcome it between ages 6 and 10. Even without help, all children get over it eventually.

Ignore bad language. If you comment on it, it will only get worse.

Vision in children usually doesn't mature or become 20:20 until age 7, but squinting, eyes appearing crossed or head tilting needs evaluation.

Play ball games like soccer, kiddy basketball or baseball. Go for walks together. Go fishing for short periods and where there are lots of small fish. Take her to the playground and play hide and seek or tag. Read or make up stories. Choose a day of the week to go to the library. Play games like checkers, old maid, war, or go fish.

Play hopscotch, marbles or any safe games you can think of or hear about. Enjoy your child.

Being a parent is enjoyable but hard work. There is so much to learn! Sometimes it helps to talk to other parents or get some advice from someone outside the family. If you would like to find out more, call this number and ask about parenting programs in your area.

LIFE LINE 275-5151

### **SAFETY**

#### **Bicycle Safety**

The bicycle is one of the major causes of serious head injury, especially in children. A serious head injury can cause lifelong problems or death.

A bicycle helmet is an easy way to protect your child's head from the impact of a fall. When worn regularly a helmet can decrease the risk of serious head injury by 85%!

Most bicycle accidents involving children are caused by falls. Falls can happen anywhere, anytime.

Helmets should be worn at all times even when riding on bike paths, sidewalks and driveways.

All children under age 5 that ride bicycles as passengers (in a seat on an adult's bicycle) are required by NYS to wear protective helmet.

At \$25-\$50 helmets are relatively inexpensive when compared to the price of a new bicycle or head injury!

When buying a helmet look for a Snell Memorial Foundation or ANSI (American National Standards Institute) sticker. This means the helmet has been safety tested and approved.

Look for a helmet with a hard outer shell and an inner liner of shock absorbent material.

Do not buy or let your child wear a helmet that does not fit properly. The helmet should be comfortable and not move around on your child's head when the chin strap is properly adjusted.

### **Don't Let Your Child Ride A Bike Without Wearing A Helmet!**

## **WATER SAFETY**

Water is one of the most dangerous hazards your child will encounter. Young children are curious and attracted to water.

Young children can drown in only a few inches of water, even if they have had swimming lessons.

### **Here are some ways to prevent drowning:**

- never leave a small child unattended in the bathtub
- do not allow children access to buckets or pails of water (remember, a toddler could fall into one of these and drown in water only a few inches deep)
- teach children to swim after age three. This will make them feel more comfortable in and around water.
- watch your child constantly around all water—even a child who knows how to swim.
- an adult should always supervise swimming activities and stay at the edge or in the water.
- never drink alcohol while you are supervising swimmers or are swimming yourself.

### **Make children follow these water safety rules:**

- no running near the pool
- no pushing others underwater
- no diving into the shallow end.

If you or a neighbor has a swimming pool, make sure it is completely surrounded by a tall fence with a self-

locking gate. Keep the gate closed and locked at all times.

## **BEDTIME**

Does it take forever to get your child to sleep each night? Some children at this age find every excuse to delay going to sleep.

The best way to handle this problem is to anticipate your child's wants before putting him to bed.

Some items to have handy at bedtime:

- glass of water
- favorite toy or blanket
- nightlight
- favorite bedtime story

At bedtime, remind your child to brush his teeth and go to the bathroom. Put your child to bed by reading his favorite book, give him his water or favorite toy, turn on the nightlight and leave the room. Don't go back into the room after you say good night. This will be hard at first but he needs to get used to falling asleep on his own.

## **THINGS YOU MAY BE WORRIED ABOUT**

### **Bedwetting**

Bedwetting is very common problem. Pediatricians consider it normal until at least 6 years of age. This tendency appears to be inherited.

Ten percent of children aged 6 still wet the bed.

Most children who wet the bed have bladders that are too small to hold all the urine that is produced during the night (they are born with this problem). In addition, they don't wake up to the signal of a full bladder.

Even without treatment, all children get over wetting the bed eventually, most overcome the problem between ages 6 and 10.

Wait at least six months after toilet training your child before starting to help her overcome bed wetting. Pain associated with urination or a marked increase in bedwetting should be discussed with your doctor.

### **Here are some helpful ideas**

Encourage your child to get up to go to the bathroom during the night. Remind her before bedtime and leave a light on in the bathroom to help.

Encourage your child to go to the bathroom less frequently during the day. This will help to stretch her bladder. But remind her to use the bathroom at bedtime so she starts her night with an empty bladder.

Encourage your child to drink fluids during the morning and early afternoon. The more fluids she drinks, the more she will produce, and more urine leads to larger bladders.

Limiting fluids before bedtime is sometimes helpful.

Absorbent pull-ups allow your child to go to the bathroom independently during the night, and also help to protect sheets and pajamas from getting soaked.

A plastic mattress cover will help protect the mattress. Odor becomes a problem once urine soaks into the mattress.

Make a plan with your child for the mornings when there are wet pajamas or sheets. Let her take responsibility for rinsing out her pajamas and underwear to get rid of the odor.

Respond positively to dry nights. Praise your child when she wakes up dry. A calendar with a gold star for every dry night can help.

Be gentle when your child has a wet night. Most bed-wetters already feel guilty and embarrassed about their problem. Punishment or pressure will only slow down curing the problem and it may cause emotional problems later in life. Don't let older sisters and brothers tease the bed-wetter.

## **TELEVISION AND YOUR CHILD**

Although television can be a great teacher, it can have negative effects on your child.

Did you know? Children aged 2-5 watch approximately 25 hours of television a week! Older children aged 6-17 watch 22-23 hours of television a week.

TV viewing is one cause of violent or aggressive behavior.

Children identify with TV characters and imitate the violence they see on TV.

TV watching is related to poor schoolwork. Children spend many hours sitting and watching the TV instead of playing actively.

Without active play, your child doesn't build the skills he will need to succeed in school and in later life. Also time that could be spent doing homework or fun reading is used up watching TV.

Excessive TV watching can lead to overweight children. Children who watch a lot of TV have little time for exercise. And many children load up on snacks while watching, especially the high calorie sugary kind of snacks that TV advertises.

Not all television is bad. You, as the parent, must take charge of the TV viewing. Watch TV with your child. This way you can talk to your child about what he's watching and his feeling about the show or any issues that it brings up. Make watching TV a family learning experience.

Limit your child's TV watching to 1-2 hours per day. Don't be surprised if he puts up a fight the first time you turn off the TV. Instead, offer some alternatives to him. Read together, color a picture together or take him to the playground. Your child will learn that doing is more fun than watching!

Help your child plan what he will watch. Planning what both of you want to watch will avoid having the TV on all the time. This prevents you from using the TV as a babysitter.

## **HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN**

### **Reading**

Reading to your child is the most important tool in teaching her to like reading and to eventually read for herself. Preschoolers enjoy being read to by an adult. They like books with detailed pictures to look at and words that they can recognize. Ask your child questions about the pictures and words as you read together.

Share your own books and magazines with your child. This sets a good example for her. She will learn how important reading is for adults too!

Enroll your preschooler in a story hour at your local public library. While you are at the library, spend time with your child picking out some books you can read together at home.

Even after your child starts school, she will still enjoy reading with you. Choose a book that you read together, chapter by chapter, each night. Your child can practice reading to you.

If reading begins as a fun experience when your child is young, she will continue to enjoy reading as she gets older.

## **POISON CONTROL CENTER**

*1-800-222-1222*

## **COMING ATTRACTIONS**

Before his next checkup, your child may:

Have new friends outside of the household...

Be able to read...

Write her first and last name...

Have questions about birth and death...

Be able to tie her shoes...

Imitate the behavior of others she sees in school...

Increase the amount and types of foods she will eat...

We encourage you to visit our website at:

[www.westside-pediatrics.com](http://www.westside-pediatrics.com)

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