

Things You Should Know: Your Child at 6-7 Years

NUTRITION

- It is often a challenge to get your child to eat nutritious foods from all five food groups. The best thing you can do is to keep healthy food in the house and offer it for meals and snacks. Limit the amount of fatty foods, salty snacks, sweets and soda you have in the house. If the junk food isn't around, they won't eat it.
- **Offer at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.**
- Milk is important for bone growth. **Get at least three servings per day of skim milk or high calcium food. Avoid all sweet drinks including soda, Kool-Aid, sports drinks and sweet tea. Limit juice to 6 ounces per day.**
- It is important for your child to **eat a healthy breakfast**. Children who eat breakfast are more likely to have more energy, work faster, be more creative and do better in school.
- **Eat meals together as a family at the kitchen table.** Create a pleasant atmosphere at mealtime. Give your child opportunities to join in the conversation.
- **Offer small portions** with second helpings if the child wants more food.
- **The major contributors to obesity are 1) sugar containing drinks 2) fast food and 3) large portion sizes.**

SLEEP PATTERNS

- It is very important for children in school to **have a set bedtime that allows for 9-12 hours of sleep.**

DISCIPLINE

- Discipline is very important. Every child needs structure and limit setting. In fact, many children act out or misbehave to explore what their limits are. By setting limits, you teach your child appropriate behaviors and show that you love and care. Physical punishment may be effective, but often gives the child a message that hitting and physical violence are okay. Time out and taking away toys or privileges are very effective in this age group. Time out should be one minute per year of age. Use this as a teaching tool. Ask if the child understands why the behavior is inappropriate and then forget it after time out is over. Positive reinforcement and consistency are the keys.

SAFETY

- **Children this age should ride in a booster seat in the back seat. A seat belt alone is not safe for children this age.** Be firm about this. Don't leave the driveway until all are buckled up, including you. Set a good example. See our Car Seat Guidelines handout for further details.
- **Children should wear appropriate helmets** and protective gear while bicycling, skating and playing sports.
- **To avoid sunburn, limit your child's exposure to the sun and use sunscreen. Purchase a sunscreen that is "broad spectrum" with at least an SPF of 15. Apply the sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside.**
- Children should learn to swim.
- There should be smoke detectors outside every bedroom. Check the batteries frequently. Buy a fire extinguisher. Practice a fire safety plan with your child.

- Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended in every home.
- Guns should be locked up and ammunition stored separately.
- Children should be constantly supervised by an adult while around water. Life jackets are critical when boating and swimming in lakes and streams.
- Remind your child not to talk to or get into cars with strangers.
- **Talk about safe touch with your child.** Remind your child that no one should touch parts of the body that are covered by a bathing suit. Teach your child to tell someone if he or she is touched in a way that is unpleasant.
- Talk with your child about street safety. Review crossing the streets at corners, looking both ways, and using traffic lights.

GOOD HEALTH HABITS

- **Exercise is very important** to keep your child healthy. Children who exercise regularly sleep better, have more energy and build strong bones and muscles. It will also help your child feel good about him or herself.
- **Your child should visit the dentist every six months. Help your child brush twice a day with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste.**

GOOD PARENTING PRACTICES

- **Parents should spend active time with their child daily** and praise and encourage their child's activities.
- Show pride and affection in each child's special strengths and praise them often.
- **Rules should be made to be followed at home** such as bedtime, television and computer time, and chores such as setting the table or keeping the child's room neat.
- **Limit screen time. Turn off screens during meals and one hour before bedtime.**
- **Encourage reading** and other hobbies. Help your child get a library card and the family can make regular trips to the library. Read together as a family.
- Consider enrolling your child in community youth sports or encouraging family activities such as biking, running or swimming. If your child is involved in organized sports, make sure the coach emphasizes learning and play more than competition and winning.
- **A drug-free, tobacco-free, vape-free and alcohol-free environment is essential for your child.**

IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL VISITS

- We would like to see your child yearly for a well exam.
- There are no scheduled shots at the next well check.
- Yearly Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are recommended.

Please do not hesitate to call or text our office if you have any concerns or questions!