

Things You Should Know: Your Child at 8-9 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 foods in the house and offer it for meals and snacks. Limit the amount of fatty foods, salt, sugar 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 three servings per day of milk or high calcium foods.**
- 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.
- **The major contributors to obesity are 1) sugar-containing drinks 2) fast food and 3) large portion sizes.**
- **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.

SLEEP

- It is very important for children in school to have a set bedtime that allows them **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. Loss of privileges (grounding) is an effective method of discipline. Positive reinforcement and consistency are the keys.

SAFETY

- **Children should remain in a booster seat until the seat belt fits properly, which is typically when they are 4 feet 9 inches tall. Make sure your child rides in the back seat and is properly buckled.** Don't leave the driveway until all are buckled up, including you. Set a good example. Be firm about this. See our Car Seat Guidelines handout for further details.
- **Children should wear appropriate helmets** and protective padding when bicycling, skating and skateboarding.
- If your child participates in team sports, make sure safety is a priority and that fun is the goal and not winning.
- Trampoline use is dangerous and discouraged in children.
- **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 how to swim.
- There should be smoke detectors outside every bedroom. Check the batteries frequently. Buy a fire extinguisher. Practice a fire escape plan with your child.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended in every home.

- Guns in the home are a danger to the family. 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.
- Teach your child the appropriate use of 911.
- 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 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 see the dentist every six months and brush twice a day with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste.**

GOOD PARENTING PRACTICES

- Parents are role models for their children in terms of behavior, attitudes and morality.
- Spend active time with your child daily and offer praise and encouragement often. Show pride and affection in each child's special strengths.
- **Establish rules at home that are fair and understandable.** Rules to be followed at home include a regular bedtime, television and computer time and chores, such as setting the table, keeping the child's bedroom neat, outside activities and homework. **It is important for you to follow through with the consequences if a rule is broken.**
- 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.
- **Limit television viewing, video games, phone and computer time and supervise the types of programs your child watches. Turn off electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime.**
- Consider enrolling your child in community youth sports or encouraging family activities such as biking, running or swimming. Children who do not want to participate in a team sport can be encouraged to consider an individual sport such as swimming, dance or gymnastics.
- **Maintain good communication with your child. Your child should feel free to share worries and fears with you without fear of punishment.**
- Make appropriate childcare arrangements for when you are not at home. **You should know where your child is at all times.**
- **A drug-free, tobacco-free, vape-free and alcohol-free environment is essential for your child.**

IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL VISITS

- Your child continues to need yearly well child exams.
- At the 9 year well visit your child will receive the HPV vaccine.
- Yearly Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are recommended.

- Your child may need cholesterol screening at the 9 year well visit.

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