

**YOUR GROWING CHILD...**

Children grow, change, and learn differently. Here are some tips to help you enjoy and keep your child healthy and safe. Please contact us if you have questions or concerns about your child. Metropolitan Pediatrics offers a 24/7 nurse triage line by contacting the scheduling line at each office.

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**Health:**

- Regular well visits are important to ensure normal growth and development.
  - Children need a well child check once per year.
- Appetite will vary depending on growth and activity.
  - Offer 3 meals and 1-2 healthy snacks per day.
  - You decide what to serve, when and where. Offer the same food you make for everyone else. Let your child decide how much (if any) to eat.
  - To prevent choking, your child should never be left unattended while eating. Avoid nuts, popcorn and small hard candy until 5 years of age. These are easy for your child to choke on. Table foods that aren't cut appropriately can be high risk (for example: hot dogs, grapes).
- Dental visits are recommended once every 6 months.
  - Brush teeth twice per day. Children's toothpaste with fluoride is recommended in small quantities (pea-sized on the brush).
  - Juice and other sugar-sweetened beverages are not recommended for children.
- May sleep 9-11 hours at night.
  - Keep a regular bedtime routine.
  - May be afraid of the dark and going to bed. Read bedtime stories and use a night light to comfort and help them feel safe.
- Children need regular exercise, like biking, playing sports, or playing games outside. Aim for a minimum of 1 hour per day.
- Immunizations are recommended at 5 years of age to prevent serious illness in your child as well as to prevent the spread of infections.

**Learning:**

- Children at this age:
    - Can be understood easily, count to 10-20, say the ABC's, know colors, and memorize books or songs.
    - Run, hop, skip, play catch, ride a tricycle and even a bike without training wheels.
    - Like to do puzzles, color and draw pictures, and write their name.
    - Choose their own clothes, get dressed by themselves, wash hands, and comb hair.
    - Make good friends and learn to share.
    - Begin to know right from wrong and can perform simple household chores.
    - Like to make their own decisions. Give choices when possible.
    - Test boundaries. It is best to set limits, be consistent, and use distractions. Praise your child often!
  - Use non-violent discipline.
  - Remember that an Early Childhood Screening is required before starting school. Be on the lookout for information from your school district about scheduling.
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- Limited screen time is allowed for children older than 2 years of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises less than 2 hours of age-appropriate screen time per day.
- Consider enrolling in Parent Powered Texts to receive tips for learning and development at [thinksmall.org/texts](http://thinksmall.org/texts).

### Safety:

- Children should always use a forward-facing harnessed seat properly secured in the back seat until they outgrow the weight limit (typically 40-60 pounds, depending on the individual seat). Children must use a booster seat after they outgrow a forward-facing harnessed seat until age 8 or until they reach 4 feet 9 inches tall. However, it is preferable to keep a child in a booster seat based on their height rather than age.
- Talk to your child about strangers and explain “safe touch versus non-safe touch”
- Make sure your child knows his/her full name, parent’s names, home phone number, and emergency number (911).
- Require helmet use when your child is riding any wheeled toy. Be a good example!
- Teach your child respect for animals. Never allow the child to play around an animal who is sleeping or eating.
- Children are curious. Lock up your guns and bullets separately. It is the law and will decrease the risk of accidental injury or death caused by firearms.
- Provide close supervision anytime you will be around water (bathtub, pool, lake). Model appropriate water safety by wearing life jackets on or near the water.
- Consider swimming lessons.
- Don’t let anyone smoke or vape around your child.
- Use sunscreen and sun-protective clothing when spending time outdoors.
- Enforce that your child wears a helmet when riding a bike.
- Use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check them twice per year (such as at daylight savings time). Have a safety plan and practice it!
- Minnesota Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222