



YOUR GROWING CHILD...

Children grow, change, and learn differently. Here are some tips to help you enjoy and keep your child healthy and safe. You may wish to read through this packet with your child. 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.

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.
 - Family meals at the table are important. Avoid TV and cell phone use during meals!
 - May not grow as fast and may eat less than before.
- Dental visits are recommended once every 6 months.
 - Brush and floss teeth twice per day. Children's toothpaste with fluoride is recommended.
- May sleep 10-12 hours at night. Keep a regular bedtime routine.
- Children need regular exercise, like biking, playing sports, or playing games outside. Aim for a minimum of 1 hour per day.

Learning:

- Children at this age:
 - Can write clearly and tell time.
 - Are improving their reading and math skills in school. Parents should communicate with their teacher to understand how they are doing.
 - Understand right from wrong. They learn to play games by the rules.
 - Start to question authority. Parents MUST set limits and stick to them.
 - Should help with household chores.
 - Want more independence. Help them to make their own decisions and be a part of family talks.
 - Want privacy. Respect this need. Parents can start to talk openly about body changes and sexuality.
 - Want to spend time with friends and feel connected to school. Help them build positive relationships with other children and adults at school and in the community.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics advises less than 2 hours of age-appropriate recreational screen time per day.
 - As a parent, it is your job to talk with your child about smart and safe media use.

Safety:

- Children must use a booster seat after they outgrow a forward-facing harnessed seat. **The law requires a booster seat until the age of 8 or until the child reaches 4 feet 9 inches tall.** However, it is preferable to keep a child in a booster seat based on their height rather than age.

- Your child is ready for an adult seat belt when they can sit with their back against the seat, knees bent comfortably and completely over the vehicle seat edge without slouching, and feet touching the floor. Children 4 feet 9 inches or taller can correctly fit in a lap/shoulder belt.
- Children under age 13 should always ride in the back seat. Make sure everyone always wears a seat belt.
- Get to know your child's friends and their families.
- Teach rules for your home. Practice what to do when home alone and where to go in an emergency.
- Discuss the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. Teach how to say no.
- Teach about strangers and appropriate touch. Warn children about the importance of privacy and the dangers of predators, including on the internet.
- Treat media as you would any other environment in your child's life. Know what platforms, software, and apps your children are using, what sites they are visiting, and what they are doing online.
- Use a helmet when biking, skating or on anything with wheels. Teach bike safety rules. Be a good example.
- Wear protective sports gear such as helmets, mouth guards, and knee/wrist pads.
- Make sure your child wears a life jacket and watch him/her closely when on or near the water. Model appropriate water safety.
- Lock up your guns and bullets separately. It is the law.
- Use sunscreen and sun-protective clothing when spending time outside.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check them twice per year (such as at daylight savings time). Have a safety first plan and practice it!
- Minnesota Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222