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Well Child Care at 6 Years

Nutrition

Having many or most meals together as a family is desirable. Mealtime is a great time to allow the child to tell you of her day, interests, concerns, and worries. Encourage your child to talk and listen to others at the table.

Balance good nutrition with what your child wants to eat. Major battles over what your child wants to eat are not worth the emotional cost. Bring only healthy foods home from the grocery store. Choose snacks wisely. Children should drink soda pop only rarely. Low-fat milk is a healthier choice.

Good table manners take a long time to develop. Model table manners for your child.

Development

Your child will grow at a slow but steady rate over the next 2 years. See your child's doctor if your child has a rapid gain in weight or has not gained weight for more than 4 months.

Kids can start to develop life long interests in sports, arts and crafts activities, reading, and music. Encourage participation in activities. Remember that the goal of competition is to have fun and develop oneself to the greatest capacity. Winning and losing should receive limited attention. Physical skills vary widely in this age group. Find activities that best fit your child's skills, such as endurance (running), power (swimming), or excellent visual skills (baseball or softball).

Get involved in your child's school and stay aware of how your child is doing. If your child is struggling, meet with the teacher, counselor, or principal.

Behavior Control

- Kids at this age may take risks. Although they confidently think they will not get hurt, parents should watch them closely, especially when they are near roadways, open water, or near a fire or electricity.
- Kids seem to have boundless energy. Prepare in advance for ways to let your child enjoy physical activity.
- Dawdling is a normal response at this age and demonstrates that a child is having a difficult time planning and thinking through the steps of accomplishing a task.
- Adults play important roles in the life of children at age 6. Children will develop close relationships with teachers. It can be upsetting to a child when adults they love (including parents and teachers) go through difficult times or changes.

Reading and Electronic Media

Read to your child on a daily basis. Make reading a part of the nighttime ritual.

Limit electronic media (TV, DVDs, or computer) time to 1 or 2 hours per day of high quality children's programming. Participate with your child and discuss the content with them.

Dental Care

- • Permanent teeth may soon come in or may have already started coming in.

The grooves on the permanent teeth are prone to cavities. Parents and dentists need to watch the teeth carefully and consider whether sealants (plastic coatings that adhere to the chewing surface of the molar teeth) may help prevent tooth decay.

Safety Tips

Fires and Burns

- Practice a home fire escape plan.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Tell your child about the dangers of playing with matches or lighters.
- Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out.
- Turn your water heater to 120°F (50°C).

Falls

- Do not let your child use outdoor trampolines.
- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.

Car Safety

- Everyone in a car must always wear seat belts or be in an appropriate booster seat.
- Don't buy motorized vehicles for your child.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- Supervise street crossing. Your child may start to look in both directions, but is not ready to cross a street alone.
- All family members should ride with a bicycle helmet.
- Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near busy roads.
- Children who ride bicycles that are too big for them are more likely to be in bicycle accidents. Make sure the size of the bicycle your child rides is right for your child. Your child's feet should both touch the ground when your child stands over the bicycle. The top tube of the bicycle should be at least 2 inches below your child's pelvis.

Strangers

- Discuss safety outside the home with your child.
- Be sure your child knows her home address, phone number and the name of her parents' place(s) of work.
- Remind your child never to go anywhere with a stranger.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.
- Teach your child that even though smoking is unhealthy, he should be civil and polite when he is around people who smoke.

Immunizations

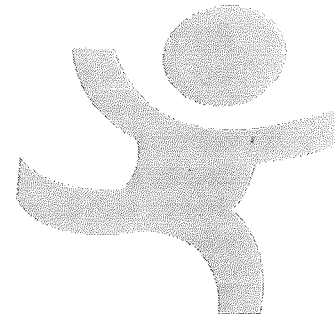
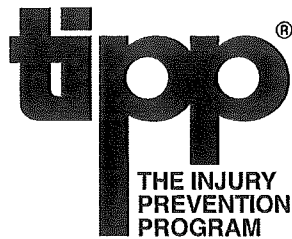
Your child may already be current on all recommended vaccinations.

An annual influenza shot is recommended for children up until 18 years of age.

Next Visit

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that your child's next routine check-up be at 8 years of age. Bring your child's shot card to all visits.

6 Years



6 YEARS

Safety for Your Child

Did you know that injuries are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child? Injuries are the leading cause of death of school-aged children. **Yet you can prevent most major injuries!**

At age 6, your child will become more independent. He or she will be able to do more things that are dangerous. Your child will try to prove that he or she is grown up. But children still aren't good at judging sound, distance, or the speed of a moving car at this age. Your child can learn a few simple things to do for protection, but **you must still be in charge of his or her safety.**

Fire Safety

Make an escape plan in case of fire in your home. Your fire department can tell you how. Teach your child what to do when the smoke alarm rings. Practice what you and your child would do if you had a fire.

Do not smoke in your home. Many home fires are caused by a lit cigarette that has not been put out completely.

Install smoke alarms in your house and test the batteries every month to make sure they work. Change the batteries once a year.

Firearm Hazards

Children in homes where guns are present are in more danger of being shot by themselves, their friends, or family members than of being injured by an intruder. It is best to keep all guns out of the home. **Handguns are especially dangerous.** If you choose to keep a gun, keep it unloaded and in a locked place separate from ammunition. Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.

Bike Safety

Protect your child from bad head injuries or even death. **Make sure your child wears a helmet every time they ride a bike.** Never let your child ride in the street. Your child is too young to ride in the street safely!

Street Safety

Never let your child play near the street. Your child may dart out into traffic without thinking. The park or playground is the best place to play. Begin to teach your child safe street habits. **Teach your child to stop at the curb,** then look to the left, to the right, and back to the left again. Teach your child never to cross the street without a grown-up.



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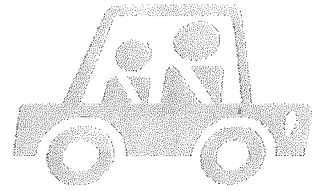
American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



And Remember Car Safety

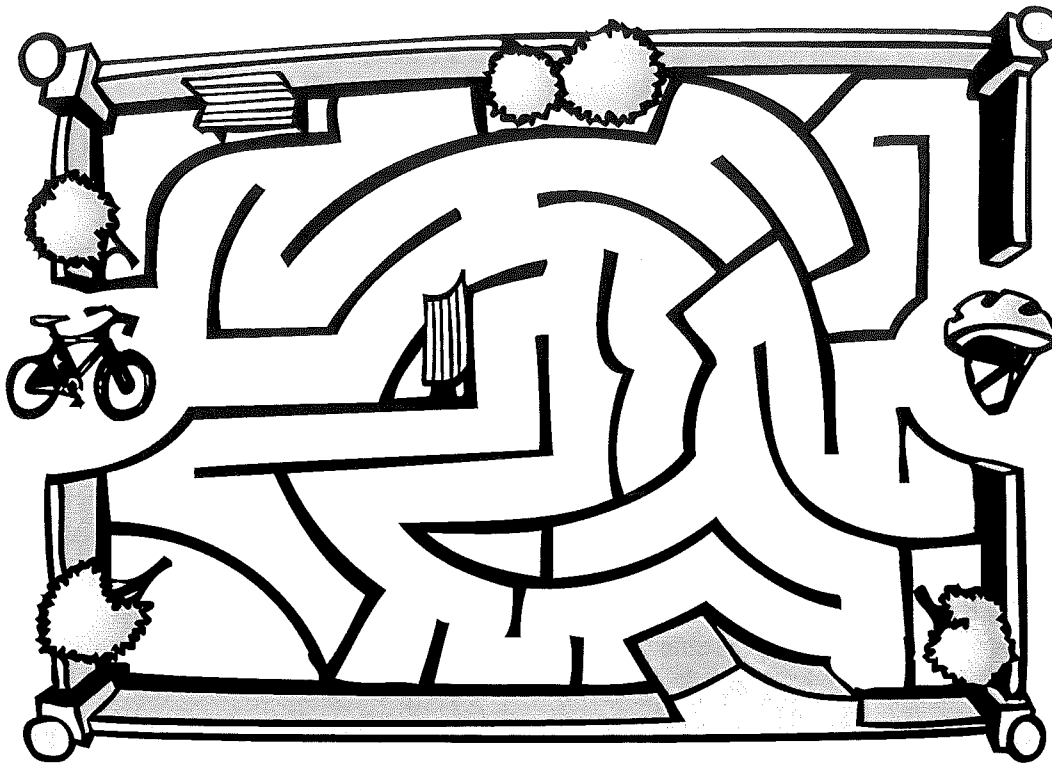
Your child must now use a **booster seat** in the car. Always check to be sure that he or she is correctly restrained in the booster seat before you start the car. Your child should use a booster seat until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face or neck (usually at about 80 pounds and 4 feet 9 inches tall). The safest place for all children, even through school age, is in the back seat of the car. Set a good example. **Make sure you and other adults buckle up, too!**



SAFETY IN A KID'S WORLD

Dear Parent: Your child is old enough to learn how to prevent injuries. The game below is designed to help your child think about safety. Read the messages with your child and talk about them together. Then take this safety sheet home and post it where everyone can see it.

It takes time to form a safety habit. Remind each other what it says. Make safety a big part of your lives.



Bike Safety

Always wear a 

when you ride your



Get the Helmet Habit!

Directions: Find your way through this maze. Connect the helmet with the bicycle.

From Your Doctor

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The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.