

Well Child Handout: Your child Age Four

Your Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

TODAY'S MEASUREMENTS

Weight: _____ pounds (_____ percentile)

Height: _____ inches (_____ percentile)

Body Mass Index: _____ (_____ percentile)

Blood pressure: _____ / _____ mm Hg

DEVELOPMENT

All kids develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your child:

- Hops on one foot
- Balances on one foot for two seconds
- Knows the names of four colors
- Dresses himself or herself, including buttons
- Knows his or her first and last name
- Sings a song from memory
- Speaks clearly
- Plays fantasy games
- Plays board or card games
- Draws a person with three parts
- Tells you what will happen next in a story

NUTRITION

By age four children should be able to eat on their own. Offer healthy foods appropriate for the whole family at meal time. This will help teach your child healthy eating habits as he or she grows up. Be a good role model by avoiding soda and junk food. Excessive snacking may lead to picky eating.

- Your child needs 800 milligrams of calcium every day. Low-fat dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese are good sources. Non-dairy sources of calcium include some breads and cereals, and green leafy vegetables. If your child is not getting enough calcium, an over-the-counter calcium supplement may help.
- Your child also needs 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D every day. This can be given as part of a children's multivitamin.
- Limit juice to no more than four ounces a day. Do not allow your child to drink soda.
- Eat meals with the whole family without the distraction of electronics.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Chickenpox (varicella), DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), Polio

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- Fever
- More irritability or fussiness
- Discomfort, redness or swelling at the site of the shot
- Rash

Labs: Your child may need a tuberculosis test.

** If needed, you can give your baby acetaminophen (Tylenol). Studies show acetaminophen may reduce vaccine effectiveness, so only use for more severe symptoms. Contact your doctor if your child's symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.*

Next Visit: Age five

SAFETY

- Check the height and weight limits on your child's car seat. Children who weigh more than 40 pounds should use a high-back booster seat until they outgrow the manufacturer's recommendations. California law requires that children use a simple booster seat until they are eight years old or at least four feet nine inches tall. For the latest guidelines, trust information from cdph.ca.gov.
- Teach safe behavior around open water and cars. These are very present dangers and children need close supervision.
- Teach your child to not follow pets or balls into the road.
- Cook on the back burners of your stove to reduce the risk of burns. If your child gets burned, apply cold water (not ice) right away and call your doctor.
- Make sure that all chemicals, medications, cleaners, knives, matches and other hazardous materials are out of your child's reach.
- Put a hat on your child and apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when he or she is outdoors.
- Have your child wear a helmet, elbow guards and kneepads when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard.
- Remind your child not to go with strangers or take anything from them. Teach your child rules on how to be safe with all adults:
 - No adult should tell your child to keep secrets from you.
 - No adult should show interest in your child's genitals.
 - No adult should ask your child for help with his or her own genitals.
- Make sure that the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you have guns in your home, keep them unloaded, locked and stored away from ammunition.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, speak with your doctor or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or ndvh.org.

- Keep the Poison Control Hotline number handy: 1-800-222-1222.

SLEEP

- Your child may stop napping during the day.
- If your child has bedtime fears, talk about them and remind your child that you are nearby. Respond to nightmares right away and comfort your child.
- If your child snores heavily or you are having trouble with his or her sleep habits, ask your doctor for help.

SETTING LIMITS

With your child able to say more words, he or she may bargain with you often—"One more story, then I'll nap," for example. Keep consistent rules and limits. Remember, you are in charge. Do not let your child hit or bite. Stop hostile behavior from your child and talk about how those actions affect other people. Teach your child how to say sorry. Be a good role model for respectful behavior. Praise your child when he or she cares about other people's feelings.

TOILET TRAINING

Most children now stay dry during the day. Bedwetting is still common at this age. Allow your child to help change the sheets if he or she has an accident, but do not punish your child for wetting the bed. Teach your child to wash his or her hands after using the bathroom.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

- Make time for the whole family to be together. This may include mealtimes, bedtimes and family vacations. At mealtimes, include your child in the conversation.
- Spend time together being active—go for walks, play at the park or ride bikes.
- Encourage your child to explore, do things on his or her own and tell you what he or she wants. Children learn self-respect and love when they feel that their ideas are important to you. Have your child tell you about his or her friends and activities at school. Listen to what your child has to say.
- If you let your child watch electronics, limit to less than two hours a day and watch together. Do not watch electronics during mealtimes. Do not allow digital media in your child's bedroom.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

- Think about enrolling your child in preschool. This can help build learning and social skills such as sharing and taking turns. If your child is not in school, give him or her a lot of chances to play with other kids.
- Children at this age ask many questions. Keep your answers short and tell the truth.
- Encourage daily exercise by taking your child to the playground or park.
- Supervise as your child eats, bathes and dresses, but let your child do more and more on his or her own.
- Read with your child every day. Let him or her tell you the story. Point out letters and play rhyming games together. Visit the library and help your child choose books that he or she likes.
- Help your child brush his or her teeth twice a day. Use a pea-sized-amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Take your child to the dentist regularly.
- Speak to your child clearly and in adult language. Do not hurry his or her speech or speak for your child.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org; American Academy of Family Physicians: aafp.org; Immunization information: immunize.org, cdc.gov/vaccines, vaccine.chop.edu, familydoctor.org and vaccineinformation.org
- Suggested reading:
 - Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age Five by American Academy of Pediatrics, Stephen Shelov, M.D.
 - Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter
 - Positive Discipline A–Z: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems by Jane Nelsen, et al.
- Other books are available at aap.org/bookstore.