Healthy Kids
Objectives

• Overview
• Sleep
• Nutrition and Diet
• Exercise and Physical Activity
• Hydration
• Doctor Visits and Immunizations
• Dental Health
• Avoiding Toxins and Pollutants
Overview

Healthy kids lead to healthy adults

• What does it take to give kids a healthy start on life?
• What does preventative healthcare for kids entail?
• How do you support the healthy development of both mind and body?
• What are the essential nutritional guidelines for children?
• How much sleep do kids need at different ages and why is sleep important?

Learn more about how you can raise a healthy kid!
The Importance of Sleep

Adequate sleep is essential for proper growth and development:

• According to the National Sleep Foundation, most toddlers require about 12 to 14 hours a day (including naps), and kids ages 5 to 12 need 10 to 11

• Studies have shown that the brain consolidates networks for memory and learning during sleep, and that kids who don’t get enough are more likely to act impulsively and score lower on cognitive tests.

• Sleep promotes growth-hormone activity, so, quite literally, children need sleep to get bigger and stronger
Tips for Improving Sleep Patterns

• Consistent bedtimes and night-time rituals are essential and make it easier for children to get the sleep that they need

• Young children need naps at consistent times – “sleep begets sleep” and skipping naps usually makes night-time bedtime harder

• Limit screen time in the evenings – the light emitted from screens suppresses melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleepiness

• Ask yourself if your child wakes up at the same time every morning without your help? Is she or he alert and in good spirits? If not, work on establishing an earlier bedtime
Diet and Nutrition

Launch a lifetime of healthy eating by giving your child a whole foods-based, nutrient-dense diet which is low in sugar and processed foods.

• Offer a diverse array of food options at meal times, providing plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products
• Work on continually expanding your child’s palate so they learn to accept new foods and can handle differing tastes and textures: a diverse diet is the best way to ensure your children are getting all the nutrients they need
• Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils, and beans for protein
• Don’t avoid healthy fats – fat is essential for growth and brain development
• Kids also need more calcium than adults, because childhood is a time of turbo bone growth
• Include full-fat milk or dairy products in moderation
• Serve reasonably-sized portions
Building Healthy Eaters

• Ban candy, soda, and junk food from the house and don’t eat those foods in front of your kids

• Have patience and don’t give up when it comes to healthy food choices – it may take 5 to 10 times before a child accepts a new food or healthy choice

• Cook at home as much as possible and involve your kids in meal preparation – plan ahead and solicit input and ideas from your children

• Aim for 2 to 3 servings of vegetables per day

• Server smaller portions and don’t reward kids for finishing everything on their plate

• Provide protein-rich snacks such as almond butter on apple slices, real cheese (not Kraft Singles or cheese sticks), whole milk yogurt with fruit, guacamole with carrot and celery sticks, turkey roll-ups, or nuts
Exercise and Physical Activity

Exercise is important for children in so many ways. Make exercise a priority for your kids!

Benefits of Exercise:

• Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles
• Helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer
• Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being
• May help improve students’ academic performance, including attention, concentration, time on task and behavior
Tips for Getting Kids to MOVE

School-based recess time does not always provide enough exercise for kids and if they are not playing sports daily, try to incorporate physical activity after-school, at home:

• Brisk walking
• Playing tag
• Jumping rope
• Playing soccer
• Swimming
• Dancing
• Gymnastics classes, martial arts, ballet or other types of dance or movement classes
Hydration

Dehydration is a serious risk for children because water composes a greater proportion of a child’s body.

• Kids have faster metabolisms, which means their systems need more water to run smoothly.

• A basic rule of thumb is that younger children should drink about 32 ounces, or four glasses, of water daily, and older kids, about eight glasses

• Kids don’t always realize that they are thirsty so offer water frequently and watch for signs of dehydration

• During hot weather and for kids who participate in sports or strenuous activities, offer extra fluid before the activity begins. They should also drink at regular intervals during the activity and after it ends

• During illness, such as vomiting or fever, watch for dehydration and offer fluids, frozen juice pops or ice cubes to keep your child hydrated
Doctor Visits and Immunizations

Consistent yearly check-ups are essential for ensuring your child’s appropriate growth and development. Immunizations are one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their children’s health.

• All childhood vaccines are given as a series of 2 or more doses. For a detailed and comprehensive schedule of recommended vaccines, visit the CDC.gov website.

• A child with a weakened immune system should not get live-virus vaccines.

• A child who is moderately or seriously ill should usually wait until he recovers before getting any vaccine.

• In addition to these routine childhood vaccines, there are other vaccines that are recommended for older children or adolescents, or for young children under certain circumstances, such as the Rabies vaccine, if bitten by an animal or vaccines related to diseases in specific countries to be visited.
Dental Health

The health of your children’s teeth and gums can have a direct impact on their overall health. Poor dental hygiene can lead to gum disease, decay, and tooth loss.

• Research suggests that the inflammation from periodontal, or gum disease, puts one at a greater risk for diabetes, Alzheimer’s, and heart disease

• Instill healthy habits early by teaching young children to floss and brush at least once per day, starting with baby teeth

• Tooth decay can be caused by formula, breast milk and juice sitting against the teeth. Babies and toddlers should not fall asleep with a bottle or sippy cup.

• Strictly limit sweet drinks, fruit juice and sugary foods to protect your kids’ teeth
Avoiding Toxins and Pollutants

Kids are especially vulnerable to toxins and pollutants since their lungs and bodies are still developing.

• When possible, opt for nontoxic cleaners without harsh ingredients such as ammonia and bleach
• Open windows for ventilation as often as possible, even when you’re not using harsh cleansers
• Choose paints with low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs, potentially harmful fumes given off by paints, sealants, and adhesives)
• Minimize exposure to other potentially toxic environments, such as cigarette smoke, pesticides and chemical-laden skincare products
Conclusion

The foundations of good health for your children include the elements we discussed.

• Where can you make improvements?
• What steps do you want to take to ensure a healthy future for your child?
• What can you do to improve your own health?
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