

Fact Sheet. The Significance of Well Child Visits.

What Are Well Child Visits?

Well child visits are essential checkups designed to monitor and enhance the health and development of children. These visits are like regular health inspections that help ensure kids are on track for a healthy future.

Why Well Child Visits Matter?

Early Detection. Well child visits are vital for catching potential health issues early. It's like having a radar for health problems, so they can be fixed before they become big troubles.

Growth Tracking. Doctors measure your child's height and weight to make sure they are growing as they should, and at a healthy weight. These visits help prevent or decrease your child's risk of serious health problems when they get older.

Vaccinations. At well-child visit your child will get important vaccines that will protect them from serious diseases. Think of vaccines as your child's armor against invisible enemies.

Lead Screening: A finger prick or blood test is the best way to find out if your child has been exposed to lead. Talk to your doctor and ask if your child needs to be tested.

Hearing and Vision. Doctors do regular tests to identify problems with your child's vision and hearing. They can detect early eye and ear problems and enable needed care and treatment.

Mental Health Support. Children and teens may feel sad or "blue or cranky". If you notice a change in your child's mental health or behavior and it starts to interfere with your child's interest in play, school, or family activities, it's time to get help. Your doctor can provide guidance to make sure your child gets the care they need.

Safety Tips. During the well-child visits you will get helpful advice on how to keep you child safe, whether it's wearing a helmet when they're biking or learning about risky behaviors they need to avoid.

Nutrition and Exercise. Doctors can guide you on what diet and nutritious foods your child needs and how to keep your child active, which is key toward a strong and fit future.

Guidance and Education. Your doctor will give you advice and education on the benefits of healthy lifestyles and practices, and well as accident and disease prevention.

Health Records. Well-child visits help keep your child's health records up to date, which can be handy for school, sports, and other activities.

How Often Should You Go?

Babies and Toddlers, 0 years to 2 years old.

Babies go often during their first two years of life, sometimes even every month. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends check-ups at 2 to 5 days, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 and 24 months. And for toddler, again at 2 and a half years.

Toddlers, Children, and Teens, 3 years and older.

They should see their doctor for check-ups once a year.

Additional Information for Parents of Teens. No matter what school age your child is, there is lots to do before they go back to school. It's a good idea to add a visit to the doctor for their annual wellness care visit and sports physical. Teens also experience hormone changes. This is an important time to see the doctor during their transition from childhood into puberty.

The annual well-child visit includes a physical exam and is an important time to talk to the doctor about topics to protect your child's health. For example, your child's:

- dental and eating habits.
- emotional and mental health.
- exercise habits.
- television or computer screen time.
- social concerns or school bullying.

Pediatricians use this annual visit to discuss diet, exercise options, provide vision and hearing screenings, and test for lead in the blood and anemia (if needed). In addition, your doctor will check your child's weight, height, and body mass index (BMI) to find out if your child is growing as they should and at a healthy weight. They may order a blood sugar test if your child is overweight.

It is also a good time to talk about questions or concerns you may have about adolescent topics like:

- drinking.
- smoking.
- drugs.
- sexual activity.
- sadness and depression

Remember, well-child visits are like a compass for your child's health. They help your child stay on the path to a healthy future. Your doctor is your partner in this journey, helping to ensuring your child has the best shot at a happy and healthy life!

Conclusion.

Well child visits are your opportunity to address your child's health concerns early, receive valuable guidance on nutrition and safety, and stay up to date on vaccines. Embrace these visits as an important part of your child's journey to a healthy future!

Other resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). AAP Schedule of Well-Child Care Visits.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/Pages/Well-Child-Care-A-Check-Up-for-Success.aspx>

American Academy of Pediatrics. Well-Child Visits: Parent and Patient Education.
<https://www.aap.org/en/practice-management/bright-futures/bright-futures-family-centered-care/well-child-visits-parent-and-patient-education/>

American Academy of Pediatrics. Well-Child Visit Handouts.
<https://publications.aap.org/patiented/pages/Well-Child-Visit-Handouts?autologincheck=redirected>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccines for Children Program (VFC). VFC Answers to Parents' Questions.
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/providers/questions/qa-parents.html>

CDC. Vaccines for Your children. Catch Up on Well-Child Visits and Recommended Vaccinations.
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/vaccination-during-COVID-19.html>

JAMA Network. The Well-Child Visit.
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2661144>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive Resources
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive/resources>

Please visit this link to find many helpful resources in multiple languages for tracking milestones:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/freematerials.html#toolsfortrackingmilestones-2017>