

Checkup time

Yearly medical and dental checkups are the best way to make sure your child is healthy and developing well. Before the checkup, write down any questions or concerns you have and take the list with you. For a free screening to check for developmental delays, call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or your local school district.

Finish the vaccine series to protect your child

When your child turns four, he or she will finish a vaccine series started when he or she was younger. These remaining vaccine doses will help your child build the best protection against certain diseases, such as pertussis (whooping cough). On or after your child's fourth birthday, he or she will need another dose of these vaccines:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Influenza (flu), yearly

Booster doses of some vaccines are needed to maintain protection. When your child turns 11, he or she will be due for a booster dose of whooping cough vaccine and some other vaccines recommended specifically for this age range.



- Do you get a flu vaccine every year?
- Are you immune to measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox? Have you had these diseases or do you have a record of getting these vaccines?

Check with your doctor, nurse, or clinic to find out which vaccines you need. Most pharmacies also offer immunizations for adults.

Help your child get ready for kindergarten

You may be thinking about what you can do to get your child ready for kindergarten. Many of the things you do every day help him or her get ready. For example:

- Talk with your child about things he or she is interested in.
- Read a story to your child and talk about how it could have a different ending.
- Look at family pictures and talk about them.
- Help your child learn how to solve problems that come up when playing with friends.
- Help your child learn how to write his or her name.

A cavity can make it hard to talk and focus, so good oral health is an important part of starting school. Help your child brush after breakfast and before bed with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Your child will need your help brushing until about eight years old.

Adults need vaccines, too

Adults and older children often spread diseases to younger children and the elderly. Get immunized to protect your family and community from diseases that vaccines can prevent. Encourage everyone who spends time with your child to make sure their immunizations are up to date.

Consider these questions:

- Are the staff and other kids at your child's preschool or child care immunized?
- Have you had a Tdap shot to protect yourself and others from whooping cough?

Help your child express feelings

Your four-year-old may have very strong feelings. This is normal, but it may worry or surprise you. Your child is learning to express feelings and needs your help. Here are some ways to help:

- Help your child use words to tell you what he or she feels and whether he or she is happy, sad, frustrated, angry, or afraid.
- Take time to stop and listen to your child.
- Find books about feelings to read together.

Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Fitness and your four-year-old

If your child enjoys being active now, he or she is more likely to be active throughout life. Staying fit may help lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke later in life. It may also help self-esteem. Be active as a family and set a great example for your child:

- Go for a walk or bike ride after dinner.
- Turn on your favorite music and dance together.
- Limit "screen time" (TV, videos, tablets, and computers) to no more than two hours a day.

Eating together as a family is a good habit

Sit down to eat together as a family at least once a day. Turn off the TV and cellphones. Give everyone a chance to talk and share stories about their day. Listening and talking to grown-ups helps children learn new words which helps them read better.

When you eat at home your family is more likely to eat healthy foods from all five food groups. Your child can help you plan meals and prepare food. He or she may be more willing to try a new food if he or she helped make it.

Children are curious about their bodies

If your child asks questions about his or her body, give simple, honest answers. Try not to embarrass your child. Teach the correct names of body parts. It's normal for young children to look at and touch their genitals (private parts). They may also be curious about other children's genitals. Check on children while they play. If they talk about or explore each other's bodies, calmly help them find other things to do.

Teach your child where it's OK to take off clothing and touch his or her genitals. The bathroom and bedroom are such places. Also teach when it's OK for other people to touch his or her genitals. Examples are a doctor's exam or a parent helping to clean up after using the toilet.

Touching and exploring are normal, but you may have questions or concerns about sexual abuse. Signs may include changes in mood and behavior and/or physical symptoms, such as genital bruises, bleeding, or infections. If you see these physical symptoms, take your child to the doctor or emergency room right away. You should also be concerned about a child who knows things about sex that only a grown-up should know or who is sexually aggressive. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Safety in cars

Everyone who rides with you must use a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt that fits properly. Washington State law requires children to ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or at least 4 feet 9 inches tall. Booster seats should be used with both a lap and shoulder belt, not just a lap belt.

As your child gets older, he or she is likely to ride with other parents or caregivers. Make sure they buckle your child into a car seat or booster seat correctly. Washington State law also requires children under 13 to sit in the back seat. If your vehicle does not have a back seat, slide the front seat all the way back and, if possible, turn off the air bag.

Questions about air bags or lap and shoulder belts?

Call The Safety Restraint Coalition at

1-800-BUCK-L-UP (282-5587)

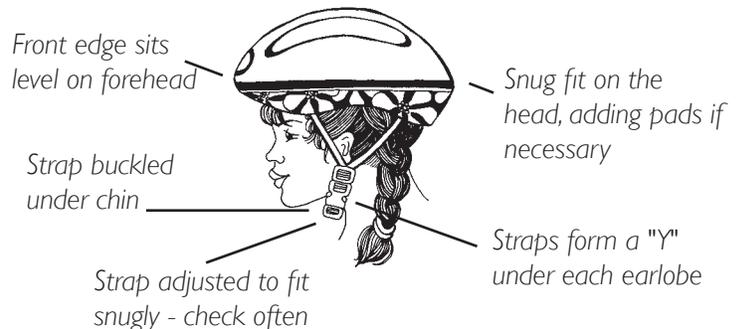
or visit www.800bucklup.org

Make sure your child uses a helmet

A helmet can protect your child from serious brain injury when using tricycles, bikes, skates, and scooters. Check to make sure it fits correctly. Make sure your child knows you expect him or her to use a helmet every time he or she rides. Set a good example by using yours. If your child skis or rides a horse, be sure he or she uses the right kind of helmet.

Take the helmet off before your child plays on playground equipment. A helmet can get caught in the equipment and cause serious injury.

Correct Helmet Use



Buy a helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or Snell standards. Don't use second-hand helmets. They may not be safe. Contact the CPSC at 1-800-638-2772 or visit www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Sports-Fitness-and-Recreation for more information.