Health and Wellness: 6 Years

Development

- Your child has more coordination and should be able to tie shoelaces.
- All aspects of your child's development (physical, social and mental skills) will grow. Your child should have normal communication skills.
- Your child may want to participate in new activities at school or join community education activities (such as soccer) or organized groups (such as Girl Scouts).
- Set up a routine for talking about school and doing homework.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends setting a screen time limit that is right for your child and the whole family.
  - — Screen time includes watching television and using cellphones, video games, computers and other electronic devices.
  - — It's important that screen time never replaces healthful behaviors such as physical activity, sleep and interaction with others.
- Spend at least 15 minutes a day reading to or reading with your child. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.

  Reading helps your child get ready to talk, improves your child's word skills and teaches him or her to listen and learn. The amount of language your child is exposed to in early years has a lot to do with how he or she will develop and succeed.
- Your child's world is expanding to include school and new friends. He or she will start to exert independence.

Feeding Tips

- Encourage good eating habits. Do not make separate meals for him or her.
- Help your child choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or sweeteners.
- Offer your child healthful snacks such as fruits, vegetables, healthful cereals, yogurt, pudding, turkey, peanut butter sandwich, fruit smoothie, or cheese. Avoid foods high in sugar or fat. Cut up any food that could cause choking.
- Your child needs at least 1,000 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day.
- Milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.
- Your child needs 10 mg of iron each day. Lean beef, iron-fortified cereal, oatmeal, soybeans, spinach and tofu are good sources of iron.
- Let your child help make good choices at the grocery store, help plan and prepare meals, and help clean up. Always supervise any kitchen activity.
- Limit soft drinks and sweetened beverages (including juice) to no more than one small beverage a day. Limit sweets, treats and snack foods (such as chips), fast foods and fried foods.

(over)

Physical Activity

- The American Heart Association recommends children get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. This time can be divided into chunks: 30 minutes physical education in school, 10 minutes playing catch, and a 20-minute family walk.
- In addition to helping build strong bones and muscles, regular physical activity can reduce risks of certain diseases, reduce stress levels, increase self-esteem, help maintain a healthy weight, improve concentration, and help maintain good cholesterol levels.
- Be sure your child wears the right safety gear for his or her activities, such as a helmet, mouth guard, knee pads, eye protection or life vest.
- Check bicycles and other sports equipment regularly for needed repairs.
- You can find more information on health and wellness for children and teens at healthpoweredkids.org.

Sleep

- Help your child get into a sleep routine: washing his or her face, brushing teeth, etc.
- Set a regular time to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Teach your child to get up when called or when the alarm goes off.
- Avoid heavy meals, spicy food and caffeine before bedtime.
- Avoid noise and bright rooms.
- Keep the TV out of the bedroom.

Safety

- Use an approved car seat or booster seat for the height and weight of your child every time he or she rides in a vehicle.
- Your child should transition to a belt-positioning booster seat when his or her height and weight is above the forward-facing car seat limit. Check the safety label of the car seat. Be sure all other adults and children are buckled as well.
- Be a good role model for your child. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Do not let anyone smoke in your home or around your child.
- Practice home fire drills and fire safety.
- Supervise your child when he or she plays outside. Teach your child what to do if a stranger comes up to him or her. Warn your child never to go with a stranger or accept anything from a stranger. Teach your child to say "NO" and tell an adult he or she trusts.
- Enroll your child in swimming lessons, if appropriate. Teach your child water safety. Make sure your child is always supervised and wears a life jacket whenever around a lake or river.
- Teach your child animal safety.
- Teach your child how to dial and use 911.
- Keep all guns out of your child's reach. Keep guns and ammunition locked up in different parts of the house.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your child's reach.
- Call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) or your health care provider for directions in case your child swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program them into your phone.

Self-esteem

- Provide support, attention and enthusiasm for your child's abilities, achievements and friends.
- Create a schedule of simple chores.
- Have a reward system with consistent expectations. Do not use food as a reward.

Discipline

- Time outs are still effective. A time out is usually1 minute for each year of age. If your child needs a time out, set a kitchen timer for 6 minutes. Place your child in a dull place (such as a hallway or corner of a room). Make sure the room is free of any potential dangers. Be sure to look for and praise good behavior shortly after the time out is done.
- Always address the behavior. Do not praise or reprimand with general statements like "You are a good girl" or "You are a naughty boy." Be specific in your description of the behavior.
- Use discipline to teach, not punish. Be fair and consistent with discipline.
- **Never shake or hit your child.** If you think you are losing control, make sure your child is safe and take a 10-minute time out. If you are still not calm, call a friend, neighbor or relative to come over and help you. If you have no other options, call your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.

Dental Care

- Around age 6, the first of your child's baby teeth will start to fall out and the adult (permanent) teeth will start to come in.
- The first set of molars comes in between ages 5 and 7. Ask the dentist about sealants, plastic coatings applied on the chewing surfaces of the back molars.
- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups. (Your child may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)

Eye Care

- Your child's vision is still developing. Make eye checkups at least every 2 years.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

If your child did not receive these shots at age 4 or 5, he or she may receive them at this time:

- ❒ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
- ❒ IPV (inactivated poliovirus vaccine)
- ❒ MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- ❒ VAR (varicella)
- ❒ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your child's immunizations.

Your Child's Next Well Checkup

- Your child's next checkup should be at age 7.
- Your child may need these shots:
  - ❒ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your child's immunizations.

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