



Working With Your Child's Doctor

Your child's doctor, a pediatrician or family practitioner, has special training in caring for children. The doctor is there to help you and your child when she is healthy and will care for her when she is ill. You and your baby will visit the doctor often during the first year of life, as you learn to care for your baby and to trust and talk with the doctor.

WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE DOCTOR

- Your doctor should give you correct and easy-to-understand information.
- You make the decisions about your child's care. Be sure to ask about all the treatment options for your child.
- If you don't understand something, you can ask for help.

WHY DOCTOR VISITS (WELL CHECK-UPS) ARE IMPORTANT

- Childhood is a time of rapid growth. It is important for your child to visit the doctor for regular check-ups even when she seems healthy. Well visits allow the doctor to examine your child and check how she is growing and the things she is able to do. The doctor will also be able to spot any problems early. The doctor will tell you how often to schedule well visits.
- Immunizations, hearing, vision, lead poisoning and other tests will be part of some visits. The doctor will also give you information about stages of development (things your child should be doing), nutrition, sleep, dental health, and discipline. Preventive care is important for raising a healthy child.
- As your child becomes more active and independent, discuss with her doctor how you can best help her develop and stay safe, and how to meet her changing needs.
- Be sure to talk with the doctor if you ever fear losing your patience or harming your child.

GETTING READY FOR A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

- Well visits are a good time for you to ask questions or discuss any concerns you have. Write down your questions before the visit. Take them with you so you don't forget to ask them.
- Keep your appointments and arrive on time.
- Have paper and pen with you to take notes so you can remember the things the doctor tells you, or ask the doctor to write down the information for you.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK

- Early signs of illness are fever, failure to eat, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, unusual fussiness or sleepiness, or a skin rash. Call your child's doctor if you notice any of these signs or if your child is having difficulty breathing or appears to be in pain.
- Be ready to tell the doctor how old your child is, what her symptoms are, and how long they have been going on. The doctor can help you decide what to do. Have paper and pen to write down the doctor's instructions. Be prepared to take your child to the doctor's office, if necessary.
- In case of a medical emergency, such as an injury or a sudden serious illness, quickly get your child to the emergency room, or call 911, and notify your child's doctor as soon as possible.