

## **NINE YEAR VISIT**

### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. Your child is now in the middle elementary school age group. Success in school is very important to your child. Parents must help their children achieve success by closely monitoring their social and academic progress by talking with their teachers. Praise your child for doing things well in school. If your child is not performing at grade level, or is not making satisfactory academic progress, you should ask the school for a comprehensive (CORE) evaluation. You must be willing to intervene on your child's behalf. Do not be intimidated by the school authorities. Please bring any school problems your child may have to the attention of your child's physician.
2. Although the acquisition of computer skills may be beneficial for your child, excessive computer use reduces the time available for children to play and to develop other skills, such as reading. Limit TV or computer use to 2 hours per day.
3. Set a routine and make a quiet place for doing homework.
4. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, dance and the arts, help children develop competence and confidence. Avoid over scheduling. Children need time to play without adult supervision. Show interest in your child's school activities.
5. Please complete the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC) to help us monitor your child's psychosocial development.

### **DIET**

1. Eating habits developed during childhood persist into adulthood.
2. A balanced diet should be offered to your child.
3. Eat together as a family as often as possible.
4. Most childhood and adult diets contain too great a percentage of calories from fat, approximately 50%. It is recommended that no more than 30% of calories be derived from fat.
5. Avoid sweets and other junk foods.
6. Vitamin supplements are not needed at this age. Fluoride supplements may be prescribed if your water is not fluoridated.

### **SAFETY**

1. Accident prevention is critical at this age.
2. Massachusetts law requires that all children riding in passenger motor vehicles must be in a Federally-approved child passenger restraint that is properly fastened and secured until they are 8 years old or over 57 inches tall. When children outgrow their booster seats, they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat if the belt fits properly.
3. Your child should never cross the street without a grown-up, never play near or in the street, and always stop and look both ways before crossing the street.
4. Children should never swim or enter the water without parental permission and supervision, never swim where water moves fast, never dive except from an official board and always wear a personal flotation device when in a boat. All children should be taught how to swim.
5. Children should never play with matches, lighters, fireworks, or firecrackers.
6. Protect your home with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and teach your children what to do when the alarm goes off.

7. If your child is riding a bicycle, skate board, scooter, roller blades or horse, ice skating, skiing, or snowboarding, insist on helmet use and other safety gear as appropriate.
8. Children should never be allowed to play with real guns.
9. If there is a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately. Ask if there are guns in homes where your child plays. If so, make sure they are stored safely.
10. Poison Control Center telephone 1-800-222-1222.
11. Cigarette smoking causes cancer. Do not expose your child to this toxin.
12. Use sun block during the appropriate times of the year.
13. Perform a full body tick check each night before bed.
14. Protect against mosquito bites. Use insect repellent sparingly.
15. Teach your child how to be safe with other adults. Make a plan for situations in which your child doesn't feel safe.
16. Teach your children when and how to dial 911.
17. Get to know your child's friends and their families.

### **DISCIPLINE**

1. Set consistent, reasonable limits. As children become more mature and are able to accept responsibility, they should be given more freedom and their limits should be increased. The parent, however, must always remain in control.
2. Children will pressure their parents to get them what "all the other kids have". Parents who give in to this demand now, will find it more difficult later to convince their children not to follow the crowd in important matters such as alcohol and drug use. Teach your child to be a leader, not a follower. Teach your child to help others. Show your child how to use words when angry.
3. Both parents must agree on method of discipline. Parents and caregivers must be consistent.
4. Reward desired behavior. Do not reward undesired behavior.
5. Self-image is important. Children like to please; they should not be referred to as bad, since they will be given a reputation to live up to. You may disapprove of what your child does, but never disapprove of your child.
6. Be reasonable, be consistent, and be patient.
7. Be a model for your child.

### **SLEEP**

1. Select an appropriate bedtime. All children do not become tired at the same time. If your child is stalling at bedtime, be firm. Do not allow your child to manipulate you. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 9-12 hours of sleep per night at this age.
2. Do not place a TV in your child's bedroom.

### **LAB TESTS**

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that all children be screened for hyperlipidemia once between the ages of nine and eleven years. Please discuss this recommendation with your physician.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

1. Influenza vaccine, if available.

NEXT VISIT: At 10 years of age.

**Parent or guardian must accompany child at all visits.**

**Copies of this and all Handouts may be found on our website at [www.tri-countypediatrics.com](http://www.tri-countypediatrics.com)**