



# Family Information

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# Healthy Bodies

# Doctor Appointments

## Benefits of Consistent Pediatric Visits

For most adults, going to the doctor is not an enjoyable event. Usually the visit is necessary due to illness or an emergency. Visiting your pediatrician should be the opposite encounter. This is a time when an medical expert can evaluate your child and assess the progression of their development. Consistency is key to successful pediatric visits. Your child's developmental milestones as well as their medical health will be closely monitored, so schedule regular appointments and follow through. The doctor can also offer tips on common topics, such as toilet training or biting issues, as well as guidance during stressful times, like dealing with the death of a loved one. If you do not feel comfortable talking with your child's pediatrician, make the time to find a new doctor. After all, you and your child will be spending a total of almost twenty years with this physician!

## Visits to the Doctor

Here are some tips to help make the visit less painful, at least emotionally!

**\*Don't 'surprise attack' a child.** It may be easier to take your child to the doctor by telling him he is going to the toy store instead. However, by fibbing to your child, you are enabling a relationship of mistrust and disrespect.

**\*Explain what the child can expect using age-appropriate language.** "The doctor may want to listen to your heart to see how fast and strong it sounds". Explain to your child what the nurse or physician's assistant may do when they are checking his/her weight, height, blood pressure and temperature. **\*Plan ahead!** Sitting in the waiting room can be boring for a young child, so be sure to pack some toys or books as well as a healthy snack to keep him/her occupied. When making the appointment, keep your child's schedule in mind and choose a time when your child is at his/her best. **\*Reassure your child.** Yes, immunizations are no fun, but they are necessary. Remind your child it will be over quickly and you will be there the entire time. Plan something relaxing and rewarding to look forward to such as renting a

children's movie that the two of you can watch at home afterwards.



## Good Dental Hygiene

Baby teeth usually make their first appearance sometime between the ages of six and seven months. It is not uncommon for children as young as three months to emerge their first tooth, nor is it unusual if a child remains toothless by her/his first birthday. Teeth typically have a development schedule. First, the two bottom central incisors appear, then the two top central incisors come next. By age two, your child should have all twenty baby teeth. Even before teeth begin emerging, proper dental hygiene is crucial! Dentists recommend wiping baby's gums after eating to rid the gums of bacteria. Once teeth are involved, you can use either a small piece of gauze or cloth and eventually a soft toothbrush. Toothpaste with fluoride should be avoided until children are three or four years old and even then, using a small amount is recommended. Too much fluoride can be lethal, so begin teaching your child early to rinse after brushing.

## Visits to the Dentist

Visiting a dentist is considered one of the scariest events for adults. To help make the visit more child-friendly, here are some tips:

**\*Prepare your child.** For the first visit, explain in simple, non-threatening terms, what will happen. For example, "When we go to the dentist, she will look in your mouth to see your teeth. She will clean them and count them and may even want to take pictures of them." **\*Check**

**out the bookstores** and library for age-appropriate children's books that describe dental visits from a child's viewpoint.

**\*Bring your child to your next cleaning appointment** if your dentist doesn't mind. This way, your child can know what to expect at their appointment. **\*Be prepared for a meltdown.** No matter how much you plan and prepare, your child may not be ready for his/her first visit. Good pediatric dentists and their staff are available for these situations, so don't be embarrassed, just be prepared to wait in another room if they feel that your presence is complicating the situation.

