



(rev.3-2024)

4 Year Check-Up

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Blood Pressure _____

IMMUNIZATIONS/TESTING

If your child has reached his/her 4th birthday, your child will receive immunizations today in preparation for school or pre-school entry. Please read the vaccine information provided and ask your doctor any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a form, giving consent for the vaccines. Your child will receive the DTaP, IPV, MMR, and Varicella vaccines. Please inform your doctor of any previous reactions to vaccines. Common reactions include fever, irritability, local redness, swelling, and pain, which may last up to 2 days. For mild reactions, treatment includes cool compresses and acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol).

In addition, you will receive a list of questions to help determine whether a PPD (a test for TB/tuberculosis exposure) is indicated. If a PPD is placed, we will need to recheck the test site in 48-72 hours. Your child is due for a blood test (hematocrit) to check for anemia. This will be done in the office or at a local laboratory depending upon your insurance. If your child is attending Head Start or is at risk for lead exposure, a lead level will also be done. Please notify your doctor if there is a family history of cardiovascular disease such as heart attack or stroke before the age of 55 in men or 65 in women or if there is a family history of any cholesterol or lipid problems. A blood test to check your child's cholesterol level may be indicated. Finally, your child's vision and hearing will be checked.

If it is flu season, please be sure all family members, especially siblings, and all people who come in contact with your child are vaccinated against influenza. Young children are at high risk for significant illness from the flu. Influenza vaccine and Covid vaccine will be offered at this appointment if medically indicated. Remember, good handwashing is the best defense against all illness any time of year.

DEVELOPMENT

At 4 years most children:

- Are able to give first and last name.

- Count to ten. Know 3 or 4 colors. Name pictures in books or magazines.
- Speak in 4-5 word sentences. Others outside the family should be able to understand most of what they say.
- Begin to understand the concept of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow).
- Ask “why” questions.
- Are able to sing a song.
- Are able to talk about daily activities and experiences. Use action words.
- Copy a circle, cross, maybe square. Draw a person with 3 parts.
- Hop, jump forward, throw a ball overhand, ride a tricycle or a bicycle with training wheels. Play hide and seek.
- Dress and undress with supervision.
- Toilet independently.
- Play with imaginary companions.
- Enjoy helping. They may assume some simple responsibilities like putting toys away, helping with household chores.
- Be aware of gender of self and others.

Children this age are able to distinguish real and imaginary, know right from wrong. They may tell tall tales, but are not always able to distinguish between honesty and dishonesty. They may also believe two unrelated events have a cause-effect relationship. They are very egocentric and believe their view is the only one. Four year olds can be very silly and may periodically regress to baby behavior. Fears are very common at this age and very real to your child. Talk your child through the fears and offer reassurance.

Socially, a 4 year old child is comfortable with other children, but may be reluctant to share. They will talk with other children, but often they don’t listen and will tattle and name-call. They will use “naughty” words to see the reaction (without really understanding the word itself).

Play with your child each day. Focus on activities he/she is interested in and enjoys. If there are siblings, make sure each child has special time alone with each parent.

Encourage family activities such as walks, biking (with helmets), playing tag, etc. Continue to read to your child. Limit screen time to no more than 1 hour a day. Always choose high quality programming and monitor what your child is viewing. Remember that the TV is not a babysitter. There should be no computer or TV in your child’s bedroom. Continue to reinforce good sleeping habits and maintain a regular bedtime routine. Assign age appropriate household responsibilities (jobs) which may increase as your child gets older.

Curiosity about body parts and the differences between boys and girls is normal at this age. Teach your child the correct terms for all body parts, including genitals. Teach that certain parts of the body (normally covered by a bathing suit) are private and should not be touched without a parent’s permission.

Teach your child to wash his/her hands after toileting and before eating. Remember to set the example by washing your own hands. Teach your child to use a tissue to wipe his/her nose and then wash his/her hands.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is very important. Children this age are increasingly independent and may seem rebellious as they test the limits. Set appropriate and realistic limits. Be sure your child knows the rules and the consequences if rules are broken. It is very important to follow through with the established consequence when rules are broken. Your discipline will be more effective if your child knows you mean what you say. **BE CONSISTENT.** Time out (1 minute per year of age) can be very effective when used consistently. Praise your child for good behavior. Star charts are an effective means of positive reinforcement.

NUTRITION

Continue 1%, or skim milk (16-24 ounces/day with meals) and eat low fat dairy products. Four year olds should be feeding themselves, but may need help. They should be eating regular table foods at family mealtimes. Let your child decide how much to eat at a meal and remember that it may not be much. **Avoid foods which can cause choking: no nuts, popcorn, gum, carrot or celery sticks, hot dogs, chips, whole grapes, raisins, or anything hard or tough. When giving peanut butter, use a thin layer, not thick chunks of peanut butter.** Do not add sugar or salt to your child's food. At this age, your child may have no more than 4-6 ounces a day of 100% fresh or reconstituted fruit juice served with a meal or a snack, but juice is not necessary for nutrition. Eating a piece of fruit offers more nutrition and is preferred. Ask your doctor if a vitamin supplement is necessary.

Continue healthy eating habits:

- 3 meals with 1-2 scheduled healthy snacks per day. A child's intake will vary greatly from day to day, but should be balanced over several days. Limit sweets and high-fat snacks. Enforce appropriate mealtime behavior, but do not force eating.
- Try to avoid allowing your child to snack/"graze" between regularly scheduled healthy snacks and meals
- Remember, children will not let themselves starve. You choose the menu, not your child. Offer them a variety of foods that you would like them to eat. If they eat, that is fine and if they don't eat, that is also fine. **DO NOT** offer them something else just to get them to eat. They will regulate their intake. Do not let meals become part of a power struggle. Allow your child to feed him/herself. Provide appropriate eating utensils.
- Do not offer junk food. If it isn't offered, they can't eat it.
- Allow your child to only eat in a chair or booster seat in a designated area. No eating in front of the TV, while playing, etc.
- Avoid using food for comfort, to soothe, or to quiet your child.
- Give water between meals and snacks if your child seems thirsty. Juice (maximum 4-6 oz. per day) may be part of a scheduled meal or snack.
- Do not put your child to bed with a cup or allow your child to carry a cup of milk or juice to drink throughout the day. The sugar will lead to tooth decay.
- Remember that children eat what they see their family eating, so encourage healthy eating habits for the entire family.

DENTAL CARE

Schedule a routine dental appointment every 6 months or as recommended by the dentist. Brush your child's teeth twice a day and floss daily once teeth are close together or touching. Use a soft brush and a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Have your child spit out the excess toothpaste after brushing. If you have well water, your child may need fluoride supplements. If your child regularly sucks fingers or thumb, begin to gently help him/her stop. Ask your dentist how to handle dental emergencies, especially accidental loss of a tooth or fracture of a tooth.

SLEEP

The average 4 year old child should sleep 10-13 hours/day including naps. Your child will typically take a 1-2 hour nap during the day. Maintain a regular sleeping routine even though your child may naturally try to resist nap time and bedtime. Nightmares and night terrors are common.

TOILET TRAINING

By age 4 years most children are bowel trained and dry during the day, but approximately 25% of children will not be dry at night yet. Be patient. It is helpful to restrict fluids 2-3 hours prior to bedtime and be sure that your child voids before climbing into bed. Do not punish your child for wetting the bed.

SAFETY

- Your child should remain in a car seat with a harness as long as your child meets the height and weight requirements allowed by the manufacturer. If your child has outgrown the height and weight requirements for the forward-facing car seat, a belt positioning high back booster or backless booster seat is to be used. Never place your child in the front seat of a vehicle with an airbag. The back seat of a vehicle is the safest place for children of all ages. Additional information can be found on the US Department of Transportation website. www.seatcheck.org or at healthychildren.org under car seat information for families
- Supervise all play near streets or driveways. Know where your child is at all times. Your child is too young to be roaming the neighborhood alone.
- Establish and enforce firm, clear, and consistent rules for safe behavior. Teach pedestrian, stranger, and neighborhood safety rules.
- Keep your child away from moving machinery, lawn movers, garage doors, etc.
- Be sure your child wears a helmet when riding a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels.
- Children need constant adult supervision, especially around water. Be sure that swimming pools have a four-sided fence with a self-closing self-latching gate. Make sure your child learns how to swim and reinforce water safety rules.
- Limit time in the sun. Use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher and use hats to shade ears, nose, and lips. Please visit the website healthychildren.org for more comprehensive sun safety recommendations.
- Test smoke alarms; change the batteries yearly.
- Keep all firearms unloaded and locked away. Store ammunition separately. Trigger locks are important. Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, smokeless tobacco, liquid nicotine, and alcohol out of sight and reach. Lock up electrical tools.
- Keep the environment smoke free.

Keep poisonous substances, medications, cleaning agents, health and beauty aids, paints and paint solvents locked in a safe place out of sight and out of reach. If there is an accidental ingestion, call **Poison Control** at **828-9123** or **1-800-222-1222** immediately. Keep the number for Poison Control by your telephone.

CONTACT OUR OFFICE

If non-urgent questions or concerns about your child develop before your next appointment, please feel free to call our office during regular business hours. Our medical advice nurses will be glad to answer your questions. They may recommend that you make an appointment to have your child seen by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

In the case of a true emergency, such as difficulty breathing/respiratory distress, loss of consciousness, seizure, profuse bleeding, or any potentially life-threatening situation, **call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room**. Due to their pediatric ER staff, our providers prefer Chippenham, St Mary's, or VCU Medical Center when you have a choice in where to take your child.

Please call **Poison Control** at **828-9123** locally or **800-222-1222** immediately in the event of any ingestion or suspected ingestion of chemicals, medications not prescribed for your child, accidental overdose, or any other substance of concern.

One of our doctors is always on call after hours for urgent or emergency care concerns. To reach our on-call service, please dial the office phone number and follow the prompts. You will be directed to our nurse on call service and may have to leave a message. You will receive a call back as soon as possible from one of our nurses or providers on call. We ask that you limit after-hours calls to urgent concerns only. Persistent problems such as ongoing illnesses (including colds), constipation, or behavior problems without sudden changes are best addressed during regular office hours when our providers are able to access your child's medical record. Please do not call after hours or on holidays to request antibiotics, including eye drops. In most cases your child will need to be seen to ensure proper diagnosis. If you feel that your child needs to be seen after hours, please take him or her to the nearest urgent care center or ER.

The next check-up is at **5 years** of age. Please call our office to schedule that appointment. Our centralized scheduling department can be reached at 804-320-1353. Please note that our office requires 24-hour notice to cancel an appointment. Thank you.