

Child's Well Visit, 6 Years: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Your child is probably starting school and new friendships. Your child will have many things to share with you every day as he or she learns new things in school. It is important that your child gets enough sleep and healthy food during this time.

By age 6, most children are learning to use words to express themselves. They may still have typical preschool fears of monsters and large animals. Your child may enjoy playing with you and with friends. Boys most often play with other boys. And girls most often play with other girls.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

Eating and a healthy weight

- Help your child have healthy eating habits. Most children do well with three meals and two or three snacks a day. Start with small, easy-to-achieve changes, such as offering more fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks. Give him or her nonfat and low-fat dairy foods and whole grains, such as rice, pasta, or whole wheat bread, at every meal.
- Give your child foods he or she likes but also give new foods to try. If your child is not hungry at one meal, it is okay for him or her to wait until the next meal or snack to eat.
- Check in with your child's school or day care to make sure that healthy meals and snacks are given.
- Do not eat much fast food. Choose healthy snacks that are low in sugar, fat, and salt instead of candy, chips, and other junk foods.
- Offer water when your child is thirsty. Do not give your child juice drinks more than one time a day.
- Make meals a family time. Have nice conversations at mealtime and turn the TV off.
- Do not use food as a reward or punishment for your child's behavior. Do not make your children "clean their plates."
- Let all your children know that you love them whatever their size. Help your child feel good about himself or herself. Remind your child that people come in different shapes and sizes. Do not tease or nag your child about his or her weight, and do not say your child is skinny, fat, or chubby.
- Limit TV or video time to 1 to 2 hours a day. Research shows that the more TV a child watches, the higher the chance that he or she will be overweight. Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom, and do not use TV and videos as a babysitter.

Healthy habits

- Have your child play actively for at least one hour each day. Plan family activities, such as trips to the park, walks, bike rides, swimming, and gardening.
- Help your child brush his or her teeth 2 times a day and floss one time a day. Take your child to the dentist 2 times a year.
- Do not let your child watch more than 1 to 2 hours of TV or video a day. Check for TV programs that are good for 6 year olds.
- Put a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) on your child before he or she goes outside. Use a broad-brimmed hat to shade his or her ears, nose, and lips.
- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around your child. Smoking around your child increases the child's risk for ear infections, asthma, colds, and pneumonia. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Put your child to bed at a regular time, so he or she gets enough sleep.
- Teach your child to wash his or her hands after using the bathroom and before eating.

Safety

- For every ride in a car, secure your child into a properly installed car seat that meets all current safety standards. For questions about car seats and booster seats, call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-888-327-4236.
- Make sure your child wears a helmet that fits properly when he or she rides a bike or scooter.
- Keep cleaning products and medicines in locked cabinets out of your child's reach. Keep the number for Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) near your phone.
- Put locks or guards on all windows above the first floor. Watch your child at all times near play equipment and stairs.
- Put in and check smoke detectors. Have the whole family learn a fire escape plan.
- Watch your child at all times when he or she is near water, including pools, hot tubs, and bathtubs. Knowing how to swim does not make your child safe from drowning.
- Do not let your child play in or near the street. Children younger than age 8 should not cross the street alone.

Immunizations

Flu immunization is recommended once a year for all children ages 6 months and older. Make sure that your child gets all the recommended childhood vaccines, which help keep your child healthy and prevent the spread of disease.

Parenting

- Read stories to your child every day. One way children learn to read is by hearing the same story over and over.
- Play games, talk, and sing to your child every day. Give them love and attention.
- Give your child simple chores to do. Children usually like to help.

- Teach your child your home address, phone number, and how to call 911.
- Teach your child not to let anyone touch his or her private parts.
- Teach your child not to take anything from strangers and not to go with strangers.
- Praise good behavior. Do not yell or spank. Use time-out instead. Be fair with your rules and use them in the same way every time. Your child learns from watching and listening to you.

School

Most children start first grade at age 6. This will be a big change for your child.

- Help your child unwind after school with some quiet time. Set aside some time to talk about the day.
- Try not to have too many after-school plans, such as sports, music, or clubs.
- Help your child get work organized. Give him or her a desk or table to put school work on.
- Help your child get into the habit of organizing clothing, lunch, and homework at night instead of in the morning.
- Place a wall calendar near the desk or table to help your child remember important dates.
- Help your child with a regular homework routine. Set a time each afternoon or evening for homework; 15 to 60 minutes is usually enough time. Be near your child to answer questions. Make learning important and fun. Ask questions, share ideas, work on problems together. Show interest in your child's schoolwork.
- Have lots of books and games at home. Let your child see you playing, learning, and reading.
- Be involved in your child's school, perhaps as a volunteer.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You are concerned that your child is not growing or learning normally for his or her age.
- You are worried about your child's behavior.
- You need more information about how to care for your child, or you have questions or concerns.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **Q661** in the search box to learn more about **"Child's Well Visit, 6 Years: Care Instructions."**

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