

Child's Well Visit, 9 to 11 Years: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Your child is growing quickly and is more mature than in his or her younger years. Your child will want more freedom and responsibility. But your child still needs you to set limits and help guide his or her behavior. You also need to teach your child how to be safe when away from home.

In this age group, most children enjoy being with friends. They are starting to become more independent and improve their decision-making skills. While they like you and still listen to you, they may start to show irritation with or lack of respect for adults in charge.

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. Offer 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.
- Let your child decide how much he or she wants to eat. 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.
- Do not let your child watch more than 1 or 2 hours of TV or video 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

- Encourage your child to be active for at least one hour each day. Plan family activities, such as trips to the park, walks, bike rides, swimming, and gardening.
- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around your child. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good. Be a good model so your child will not want to try smoking.

Parenting

- Set realistic family rules. Give your child more responsibility when he or she seems ready. Set clear limits and consequences for breaking the rules.
- Have your child do chores that stretch his or her abilities.
- Reward good behavior. Set rules and expectations, and reward your child when they are followed. For example, when the toys are picked up, your child can watch TV or play a game; when your child comes home from school on time, he or she can have a friend over.
- Pay attention when your child wants to talk. Try to stop what you are doing and listen. Set some time aside every day or every week to spend time alone with each child so the child can share his or her thoughts and feelings.
- Support your child when he or she does something wrong. After giving your child time to think about a problem, help him or her to understand the situation. For example, if your child lies to you, explain why this is not good behavior.
- Help your child learn how to make and keep friends. Teach your child how to introduce himself or herself, start conversations, and politely join in play.

Safety

- Make sure your child wears a helmet that fits properly when he or she rides a bike or scooter. Add wrist guards, knee pads, and gloves for skateboarding, in-line skating, and scooter riding.
- Walk and ride bikes with your child to make sure he or she knows how to obey traffic lights and signs. Also, make sure your child knows how to use hand signals while riding.
- Show your child that seat belts are important by wearing yours every time you drive. Have everyone in the car buckle up.
- Teach your child to stay away from unknown animals and not to chase or grab pets.
- Explain the danger of strangers. It is important to teach your child to be careful around strangers and how to react when he or she feels threatened.

Talk about body changes

- Start talking about the changes your child will start to see in his or her body. This will make it less awkward each time. Be patient. Give yourselves time to get comfortable with each other. Start the conversations. Your child may be interested but too embarrassed to ask.
- Create an open environment. Let your child know that you are always willing to talk. Listen carefully. This will reduce confusion and help you understand what is truly on your child's mind.

- Communicate your values and beliefs. Your child can use your values to develop his or her own set of beliefs.

School

Tell your child why you think school is important. Show interest in your child's school. Encourage your child to join a school team or activity. If your child is having trouble with classes, get a tutor for him or her. If your child is having problems with friends, other students, or teachers, work with your child and the school staff to find out what is wrong.

Immunizations

Flu immunization is recommended once a year for all children ages 6 months and older. At age 11 or 12, girls and boys should get the human papillomavirus (HPV) series of shots. A meningococcal shot is recommended at age 11 or 12. And a Tdap shot is recommended to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.

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 **U816** in the search box to learn more about **"Child's Well Visit, 9 to 11 Years: Care Instructions."**

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