Helping Your Child Prepare for Vaccine Shots

The pandemic has caused such a disruption in our daily lives and routines, many families have fallen behind on health-related tasks. If you haven’t already done so, be sure your child gets caught up on their medical and dental checkups and bring them up to date with their vaccines. Vaccines prevent diseases that can make children very sick and cause lifelong disabilities — and even death.

These tips will help you and your child feel calm and confident before, during and after any vaccine shot.

**Babies.** Breastfeeding mothers can nurse their baby during and after the vaccine. If breastfeeding is not an option, ask about giving oral sucrose during and after the shot. Cradle and talk to your baby, and perhaps distract them with a favorite toy. After the vaccine, provide lots of comforting hugs and soothing words.

** Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Before the day of the shot, ask about prepping with a skin-numbing cream. Just before the injection is given, tell your child they may feel a pinch that will be over quickly. Have them turn their head away from the needle, then distract them with a toy or photo. For kids ages 4 and up, teach them to ‘blow away’ the pain: have them take a long, deep breath, then blow out gently and evenly — as though blowing soap bubbles. After the shot, give plenty of praise and comfort.

**School-Age Kids, Tweens and Teens.** Before the day of the shot, ask about prepping with a skin-numbing cream. Calmly tell your child what’s going to happen; don’t tell them it won’t hurt or ask them not to cry. Suggest that they turn their head away from the needle, and offer other choices if possible, such as where they’d like to sit and which arm they prefer to get the injection in. Praise them for their successes, such as staying still and being cooperative. To prevent fainting (not unusual for tweens and teens after a shot), have them sit or lie down for 15 minutes afterwards.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is available for kids ages 12 and older. And by the time you read this, a vaccine may be offered (or available soon) for children younger than 12. It’s safe to get the COVID vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

If you have questions about any vaccine, be sure to ask your child’s healthcare provider.

Make Sure Bike, Scooter and Skateboard Helmets Fit

Use this easy, three-point check to test for a proper helmet fit.

1. **Eyes**
   - Helmet sits level on your child’s head and rests low on the forehead, one to two finger widths above the eyebrows. A helmet pushed up too high will not protect the face or head well in a fall or crash.

2. **Ears**
   - The straps are even, form a ‘Y’ under each earlobe, and lay flat against the head.

3. **Mouth**
   - The buckled chin strap is loose enough so that your child can breathe. There should be enough room so you can insert a finger between the buckle and chin. It should be tight enough that if your child opens their mouth, you can see the helmet pull down on top.

**TO LEARN MORE:**
Visit MakeSureTheHelmetFits.org.

**TO LEARN MORE:**
Visit cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/before-during-after-shots.html.
Is Your Child Getting Enough Sleep?

Sleep is crucial for the health and development of all kids, from babies to teens. Use these guidelines to know how much sleep children need at different stages.

**Infants ages 4 to 12 months:** 12 to 16 hours, including naps.
**Toddlers ages 1 to 2 years:** 11 to 14 hours, including naps.
**Preschoolers ages 3 to 5 years:** 10 to 13 hours, including naps.
**Gradeschoolers ages 6 to 12 years:** 9 to 12 hours.
**Teens ages 13 to 18:** 8 to 10 hours.
Children who get enough sleep have healthier immune systems, plus better school performance, memory, behavior and overall mental health.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1066.pdf.

Dealing with Racial Bias

The effects of racism are so damaging to individuals and our entire society, it is considered a public-health crisis. As parents, we must be aware of racial bias from the day our children are born. The American Academy of Pediatrics tells us that babies can notice race-based differences as early as 6 months. By ages 2 to 4, children can internalize or absorb racial biases simply by soaking in the actions and attitudes that surround them. And by age 12, kids can become set in their beliefs. This means that we have roughly a decade to shape a child’s learning process in a way that reduces racial bias and improves cultural understanding. Raising kids who are free of racial bias requires keen awareness, daily effort and thoughtful conversations. It starts with facing our own biases and taking steps to honor and celebrate differences among people. Since our children closely observe our actions and learn from them, it’s important that they see us interact with others in a genuinely kind and inclusive way.

TO LEARN MORE:

Prevent Drownings with Constant Supervision

For children ages 1 to 4, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death, and most of these drownings happen in private swimming pools and spas. It’s understood that children must be closely supervised anytime they’re in the water. But tragically, many drownings happen when a child enters the water without being seen or heard. In a typical scenario, a child wanders away from adult supervision unnoticed and enters or falls into a deserted pool or spa. So, it’s essential that pool and spa areas are fully fenced and that gates are always locked — and ideally alarmed — to keep children out. Even with these safeguards in place, constant supervision is still needed whenever there’s a pool or spa nearby; this might be at the home of friends or family, at a hotel or at a vacation rental. Especially in group settings, at least one adult should stick with a child to ensure they don’t slip outside or wander off. Share this duty with other adults and be sure there’s a clear hand-off of duties from one guardian to the next. For large gatherings where kids will be in or near water, adults can take turns being the ‘water watcher.’ Pools and spas are not the only hazards, of course: be vigilant when you are at a picnic area or park or campsite that has a beach, lake, pond, river or stream nearby.

‘Layers of protection’ are the surest way to prevent drownings. These essential ‘layers’ include constant adult supervision, teaching children to swim at an early age, ensuring that life jackets are worn in or near the water, and being trained in CPR in case life-saving skills are needed.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit pulse.seattlechildrens.org/layers-of-protection-for-safe-water-fun.
**Childhood Tics**

Tics are unintentional movements or sounds that are sudden, brief and repetitive. They commonly include rapid eye-blinking, facial grimaces, head movement, sniffing and throat-clearing. Childhood tics are common: up to 20% of kids may develop them. Typically, tics become apparent at age 6 or 7 and peak around ages 10 to 12. For most kids, these movements and sounds are just a nuisance, and the child simply outgrows the tics. In general, if a tic isn’t bothering your child, don’t let it bother you — and don’t draw attention to it. If you are concerned, you can ask your child’s doctor to evaluate it. You might want to capture the tic on video to show your doctor, since it might not occur during the visit.

**TO LEARN MORE:**
Visit pulse.seattlechildrens.org/childhood-tics-will-my-child-outgrow-them.

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**Quick Tip**

Create a system to check the back seat for your baby or toddler every time you get out of your car. Never leave a young child alone in a car.

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**Tummy Time**

When infants play on their tummies, it’s a chance for them to develop their motor skills, their vision and their senses. It also strengthens their muscles, especially their neck muscles, and helps prepare them for sliding, scooting and crawling. Plus, this activity helps prevent a flat spot from forming on the back of their head. Tummy time must always be supervised by a parent or caregiver. Since it’s an active time, babies need to be fully alert, with an adult nearby to interact and encourage them. And remember that for sleeping, babies must always be placed on their backs in their own sleep space. Cribs need a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet — and no blankets, bumpers or soft toys.

**TO LEARN MORE:**
Visit healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Back-to-Sleep-Tummy-to-Play.aspx.

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**Saying Goodbye to the Pacifier**

Babies and toddlers often stop using pacifiers on their own. If they don’t, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that parents begin weaning a child from a pacifier before age 24 months, to avoid long-term oral problems. Start by limiting pacifier use to naptime, before bed and for stressful moments. You might also try a new comfort item, like a soft blanket with a silky edge. Always keep it positive: praise and reward your child for not using the pacifier. Some families celebrate saying goodbye to ‘binky’ forever with a special ceremony, party or gift. If pacifier use continues past age 3, the AAPD recommends a dental evaluation to prevent potential long-term problems.

**TO LEARN MORE:**
Visit healthychildren.org and search ‘pacifier.’

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**Regional Clinic Locations**

- Bellevue
- Everett
- Federal Way
- Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic

**Main Hospital Numbers**

206-987-2000
866-987-2000 (Toll-free)

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**Online Resources**

Visit seattlechildrens.org for the following:
- Child Health Advice
- my Good Growing email newsletter
- Doctor Finder
- On The Pulse and Autism blogs
- Medical condition information
- Health & safety information
- Ways to help Seattle Children’s
- Research Institute information

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Heather Cooper is the Editor of Good Growing, which is produced four times a year by the Marketing Communications Department of Seattle Children’s. You can find Good Growing in the January, April, July and October issues of ParentMap and on our website seattlechildrens.org. For permission to reprint articles for non-commercial purposes or to receive Good Growing in an alternate format, call 206-987-5323. The inclusion of any resource or website does not imply endorsement. Your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider. © 2021 Seattle Children’s, Seattle, Washington.
Classes and Events

As the COVID-19 situation changes, we continue to adjust or postpone our classes and events to follow public-health recommendations. We now offer some classes online while some are on pause. Please check our website for the latest information. Scholarships are available. If you would like to ask about a scholarship, use the contact information for the class you’re interested in to connect with the registrar.

PARENTING CLASSES

Autism 101

This free 90-minute lecture is designed to provide information and support to parents and families of children recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. A portion of each session is dedicated to answering questions from the attendees.

View dates, sign up for live streaming or view a past lecture at seattlechildrens.org/autism101. Email Autism101@seattlechildrens.org if you have questions.

Autism 200 Series

Autism 200 is a series of free 90-minute classes for parents and caregivers of children with autism who wish to better understand autism spectrum disorder. Each class features a different topic.

Classes are on pause, but you can view past Autism 200 lectures at seattlechildrens.org/autism200. Email Autism200@seattlechildrens.org if you have questions.

Babysafe

Babysafe is a 4-hour class for new and expectant parents and others who care for babies. Topics include infant development, baby safety, injury prevention and care of common injuries for infants from birth through 12 months of age. Infant CPR is demonstrated and practiced, but this is not a certification class.

This class is currently available virtually via Zoom. The fee is $85 and each registration is good for two people from the same family. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-789-2306 if you have questions.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

This free class is for adults who regularly interact with adolescents ages 12 to 18. Youth Mental Health First Aid will improve your knowledge of mental health and substance use problems and will teach you how to connect youth with care when needed.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is now available as a two-part virtual series. The series includes a self-guided course and a live instructor-led course. The date you register for is the date of the live instructor-led course. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-9878 if you have questions.

CHILD, PRETEEN AND TEEN CLASSES

Better Babysitters

For youth, ages 11 to 14. Students learn about responsible babysitting, basic child development, infant and child care, safety, handling emergencies, age-appropriate toys, business tips and parent expectations.

This is currently a two-part class, with sessions taking place via Zoom on two consecutive weekend dates. Each session is two hours long. The fee is $50. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-9878 if you have questions.

Body Talk: Building Body Wisdom

For all preteens, ages 9 to 12 and a grownup. This is no ordinary class on nutrition and fitness. Body Talk is about learning new tools together that help us understand how our bodies and minds work as we eat and move. Topics include how to build a healthy relationship with food and trust yourself as an eater, and how to build a healthy relationship with exercise and trust yourself as a mover.

This class is offered as a two-part online workshop series. The fee is $45. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-789-2306 if you have questions.

CPR and First Aid for Babysitters

For youth, ages 11 to 15. Topics include pediatric CPR, treatment for choking, and first-aid skills. Students receive an American Heart Association Heartsaver Pediatric First Aid, CPR, AED completion card, which is valid for two years.

This class is offered as a two-part series. The series includes a virtual session as well as a short in-person skills check. The fee is $75. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-9878 if you have questions.

The Chat

The Chat is a new online workshop series on puberty and sex that reflects the content from the in-person classes, For Boys and For Girls. Offered via Zoom, each 45-minute workshop is for preteens 10 to 12 years old, plus a parent or trusted adult.

You may take any individual workshop or all five. If you register for all five events, we recommend starting with BO, Pimples and Hair — Oh My! and ending with Being Connected: Sex, Love and Everything In Between. While families can choose to attend any combination of workshops, the information in earlier sessions provides a foundation for understanding later sessions.

The fee is $25 per workshop or the series of five for $100. Learn more, view dates and register at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-789-2306 if you have questions. See a trailer for The Chat at greatconversations.com.

EVENTS

Free Car-Seat Checks by Appointment Only

WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 21 and Saturday, Oct. 23
WHERE: Seattle Children’s
REGISTER: seattlechildrens.org/carseatchecks

Register for an appointment and come learn how to safely secure your child in the car. Child passenger safety experts will check your child in a car seat, booster seat or the seat belt and answer any questions you may have. Car-seat checks will follow COVID-19 safety protocols.

Free Virtual Car-Seat Checks

King County Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians are offering free virtual car-seat check appointments via video-chat platforms. For more information, email Laura Miccile at laura.miccile@kingcounty.gov or call 206-477-8664.

South County Fire and Safe Kids Snohomish County are offering free virtual car-seat classes. Registration is required. Visit southsnofire.org/education/child-passenger-safety.