

# 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

- Encourage healthy eating habits. Most children do well with three meals and one to two snacks a day. Offer fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.
- Let your child decide how much to eat. Give children foods they like but also give new foods to try. If your child is not hungry at one meal, it is okay 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.
- Limit fast food. Help your child with healthier food choices when you eat out.

- Offer water when your child is thirsty. Do not give your child more than 8 oz. of fruit juice per day. Juice does not have the valuable fiber that whole fruit has. Do not give your child soda pop.
- 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 children feel good about their bodies. Remind your child that people come in different shapes and sizes. Do not tease or nag children about their weight, and do not say your child is skinny, fat, or chubby.
- Set limits on watching TV or video. Research shows that the more TV children watch, the higher the chance that they 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 children more responsibility when they seem ready. Set clear limits and consequences for breaking the rules.
- Have children do chores that stretch their 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, your child 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 to listen to your child's thoughts and feelings.
- Support children when they do something wrong. After giving your child time to think about a problem, help your child 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 begin an introduction, start conversations, and politely join in play.

## Safety

- Make sure your child wears a helmet that fits properly when riding a bike or scooter. Add wrist guards, knee pads, and gloves for skateboarding, in-line skating,

and scooter riding.

- Walk and ride bikes with children to make sure they know 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.
- Keep the Poison Control number (1-800-222-1222) in or near your phone.
- 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 children to be careful around strangers and how to react when they feel threatened.

## Talk about body changes

- Start talking about the body changes your child will start to see. 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 their 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, you might try getting a tutor. 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, everyone 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.

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