



DESERT GROVE

Family Medical

Specializing in the HEALTH of Your Family!

6-8 YEAR CHECK

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

Your child's growth is slow and steady. This is often called the "age of the loose tooth" or the "ugly duckling" stage of childhood. Your child's baby teeth are lost and the new permanent teeth seem too large for the face. Children's muscles become stronger and will allow him/her to play harder. Activities such as running, skipping rope, swimming, roller-skating, ice-skating, and bike riding will help build strength, and your child will have fun. Children may be afraid to try new activities, but when they do, they will repeat the activity until they do it well. At this age, the child's bones are not completely hardened. Parents should be sure to provide well-fitting shoes. Chairs and desks should allow for the feet to reach the floor and hips to fit back in the seat.

PLAYING AND LEARNING:

A sense of "hard working" develops in children at this age. Children love to succeed and enjoy when people around them notice their work. Tell them how well they have done after the task is completed. Say "thank you" and let them know how important they are to you. Give the child positive support when learning new skills. Confidence is gained by doing, taking action and getting involved. Praise your child for their successes. Children need to feel loved and capable. Building your child's self esteem is the best gift you can give your child and yourself. Closely monitor the amount of time that your child watches television and the television show's content. There should be some time set aside in the day where the television is off.

TALKING:

Children at this age can clearly tell you what they want to say. They will also begin to describe objects in a picture and explain the use of common objects such as a fork or a chair. When a child begins to read, he/she will learn new words fast.

SLEEPING:

Although children at this age seem to have endless energy, they will tire easily. The amount of sleep required at this age varies from one child to another, but on the average is from 11 to 12 hours a night. They will go to bed without a fight if bedtime rules are set and followed. Be consistent with bedtime rules. Establish a bedtime ritual that may include a bedtime story or a chance to ask your child about their day.

SAFETY:

A child's improving motor skills, sense of adventure, need for physical activity and their friends' approval may lead to some dangerous situations. Some children seem to have more accidents than others. Common accidents at this age are: falls, sports injuries, drowning, burns, and motor vehicle accidents. Parents should encourage their children to play in safe areas. You should teach your child the safety rules for bicycling, roller-skating, skateboarding, and other sports. Teach your child when it's safe to walk and how to cross a street. Teach them the proper uses of sports equipment. There are community centers where children can go to play and be watched. Swimming lessons and water safety should be taught to every child. Children should become familiar with fire safety, and choking relief procedures. You can teach your child about CPR. Children should always buckle up. The best way to teach children is by example, so buckle up your seatbelt.

Guns have become more of an issue for children. A child should not be in possession of a gun. Keep all guns locked up so children are not able to get at the guns. Keep bullets and guns in separate locations and locked up.

EATING:

The most important rule in diet is to eat healthy food. The best way to keep your child from junk food – don't buy it for your home. This is the age for “growth spurts” and they need healthy foods. At this age children are less active. This may cause a young child to become overweight. If a child is overweight, he/she may be overweight in adulthood. A balanced diet with raw fruits and vegetables, milk, bread, and cereal are important for a good health throughout life. Again, children learn by example and having healthy foods available is the key.

COMMON CONCERNS:

Starting school is a big change in a child's life. He/she must adjust to new friends, authority figures, and being away from the family for a large part of the day. Most children want to go to school and usually will adjust to the new situation with little difficulty. Parents should get involved with their child's school, homework and friends. Show them you are interested and care.

COMMUNICATION:

It is important that parents and children talk to each other. Ask your child about his/her special interest and what has happened during the day. This is a way to become a “friend” with your child.

ORAL HYGIENE:

It is important that you teach your child to take care of his /her teeth: brush, floss, and eat the right kinds of food. Children should be taught that foods with sugars can cause tooth decay. Snacks such as fresh fruits and vegetables should be provided instead of cookies and candy. Keep your child's teeth healthy and smile beautiful. Schedule a yearly preventive dental checkup. Your dentist will advise parents on proper brushing techniques.

SEX EDUCATION:

Middle childhood is an ideal age for formal sex education. Many authorities believe that the topic is best presented as a life long learning experience. Giving your child information about upcoming body changes may help them be prepared for what changes are coming. Children's questions about sex should be answered like any question about other topics, with honesty and at their level of their understanding. If they are not given the information they need, they might receive the wrong information from others.

Soon your child will grow up and will not be spending much time with you. Enjoy your child now and have fun together.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Immunizations should be up to date.