



Speaking for Children

What's best for our youngest children is best for everyone!

All children need preventive care

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, each child should have a prenatal visit with the mother/family to review medical history, 11 well-baby visits by age 24 months, plus additional annual check-ups until adulthood.

When pediatricians conduct well-baby or well-child visits, they not only interview the parent (and child, when older) to prepare a long-term and recent health history, but they also:

- **Take measurements to monitor growth** (length, height and weight)
- **Conduct sensory screening** (hearing and vision)
- **Conduct a developmental/behavioral assessment** (autism screening, developmental screening/surveillance, psycho-social behavioral assessment)
- **Make a physical examination**
- **Conduct scheduled procedures** (including a newborn hemoglobin screening, lead screening, tuberculin test, and immunizations)
- **Conduct an oral health examination** (making an oral health risk assessment, counseling for fluoride, and referring to a "dental home")

The AAP notes that each child and family is unique and these recommendations for preventive pediatric healthcare are for children who are receiving good parenting, who do not have signs of any important health problems, and who are growing and developing in a satisfactory fashion. More visits may become necessary for some children.

All children need immunizations

Vaccines help prevent infectious diseases and save lives. Many infectious diseases that were once common in this country, including polio, mumps, measles, tetanus, and influenza have been controlled by universal immunization practices. Children receive the most vaccines in the first two years of their lives because this is when they are most susceptible to the complications of these early childhood diseases. Without immunizations, *at the right time*, infants are vulnerable to diseases which can cause high fever, breathing problems, meningitis and brain injury, deafness, blindness or paralysis, and even death.

All children need healthcare

"All infants, children, adolescents, and young adults through 21 years of age must have access to comprehensive health care benefits that will ensure their optimal health and well-being. These services should be delivered in a comprehensive *medical home*—the setting for primary care delivered or directed by well-trained physicians who are known to the child and family, who have developed a partnership of mutual responsibility and trust with them, and who provide accessible, continuous, coordinated, and comprehensive care." (*American Academy of Pediatrics, Policy Statement, Scope of Health Care Benefits for Children from Birth through Age 21, March 2006*)

First 5 Sonoma County supports comprehensive healthcare for all children. For information about FREE or low-cost health insurance for Sonoma County kids, call (800) 427-8982.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, young children should be immunized against ten diseases; this requires a schedule of up to 30 separate injections before the age of six.

The AAP believes that vaccines are one of the most successful medical advances of all time, but understands that parents may have questions about vaccines and their children. First 5 Sonoma County urges parents to talk to their pediatrician or local clinic, get information online, and become informed.

- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) <http://aap.org/healthtopics/immunizations.cfm>
- Childhood Immunization Support Program (CISP) <http://www.cispimmunize.org>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines> or call the CDC Information Center (for help in English or Spanish) at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

All children need developmental screenings

One of the main goals of routine preventive health care is to make sure a child is developing normally. The benefits of early identification and treatment on child health outcomes are proven.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), each child should have developmental screening to identify children who may have developmental delays or disabilities—such as hearing, language, communication skills, crawling and walking, and appropriate social/emotional behaviors. A pediatrician uses developmental screening at every well child exam, beginning at birth. With proper interventions, the impact of many problems can be greatly reduced or eliminated.

For more information about Early Identification and Developmental Screening, visit <http://aap.org/healthtopics/early.cfm>.

All children need oral healthcare

Dental disease is 100% preventable. But children need regular dental care and good dental care habits to maintain oral health. Dental services for children in Sonoma County continue to be a serious need and a gap in insurance coverage.

First 5 Sonoma County has partnered with the Women Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC) and the Dental Health Foundation to provide dental assessments, parent education, fluoride varnish applications and care coordination for treatment (if needed) of children enrolled in the county WIC programs.

For information about WIC enrollment, visit <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/wic/index.htm>.

All children need good nutrition

First 5 Sonoma County encourages parents to make good nutrition a family priority. Be informed, make smart choices, set a good example, and encourage your child's healthy eating habits.

The USDA offers nutrition guidance through "the food pyramid." The USDA recommends making smart choices from every food group, finding a balance between food and physical activity, and getting the most nutrition out of our calorie choices. There are now five food groups, plus oils:

- **grains** - whole/cracked wheat, cornmeal, oatmeal, brown rice
- **fruit** - any fruit or 100% fruit juice is ok; fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried
- **vegetables** - dark green and orange veggies are especially healthy
- **dairy** - milk, yogurt, cheese
- **meat and beans** - beef, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts
- **oils** - contain essential fatty acids; most people eat enough in nuts, fish, salad dressing and cooking oil

Visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers>.

All children need to be active

Exercise, along with a balanced diet, helps your child to grow and develop, to increase his or her confidence, learn problem-solving and social skills, and develop lifelong healthful habits. With childhood obesity on the rise, it is important to get children into the habit of being physically active early.

Read tips for raising a fit preschooler at <http://www.pbs.org/parents/fitness/article-fitpreschooler.html>.

About First 5 Sonoma County

First 5 Sonoma County funds children's health insurance and programs that improve childcare quality, help children succeed in school, and help parents provide safe and nurturing environments for their children. For more information on *First 5 Sonoma County* and its programs, please call 565-6626 or visit www.first5sonomacounty.org