

# The Well-Child Visit:

## Why Go and What to Expect



Regular checkups are an important way to keep track of your child's health and physical, emotional, and social development. These visits are important for ALL children, including children and youth with special health care needs who may also be under the care of specialists. Your conversations can range from sharing your successes and milestones, to overall concerns about child development, to challenges in daily routines. Think of these visits as your chance to learn as much as you can about the best ways to help your child grow. By focusing on your child's growth and learning, both you and your health care professional make sure your child is developing as expected. Your family and health care professional form a partnership based on respect, trust, honest communication, and understanding your family's culture and traditions.

### How to prepare for the well-child visit

To get the most out of your time with the health care team during the visit, take a few simple steps to prepare. For example:

- 1 Make notes about what you've noticed about your child's health and development. Include any changes in behavior or family routines.
- 2 Write a list of questions. You will have time to ask them during your visit. If you have many questions, ask the most important ones first and plan for another time for a longer discussion. The Well-Visit Planner (see link below) is an online tool that can help you identify questions and concerns to raise with your health care professional. Encourage your teen to ask questions about his/her own health.
- 3 Gather information that might be helpful for your health care professional. Share information from school (such as your child's Individualized Education Program) or child care to help your health care professional learn more about your child.

### What to expect during your visit

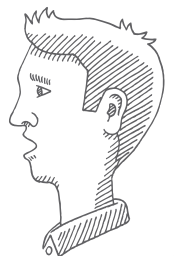
A well-child visit is a chance to get regular updates about your child's health and development. Your health care team will take measurements, conduct a head-to-toe examination, update immunizations, and offer you a chance to talk with your health care professional. Your well-child visit includes 4 specific activities:

- 1 Determining whether your child has any health concerns
- 2 Offering ways to keep your child from developing health concerns
- 3 Providing support for your child's overall health and well-being
- 4 Talking through health information and offering advice

By focusing on each activity, your health care professional offers you tools and information that you can use to support your child's development.

### What will **you** talk about?

- ➡ Your **child's growth and development**
- ➡ Your **proud moments**
- ➡ Your **family's health**
- ➡ Your **everyday life**
- ➡ Your **challenges**
- ➡ Your **health care professional's advice**



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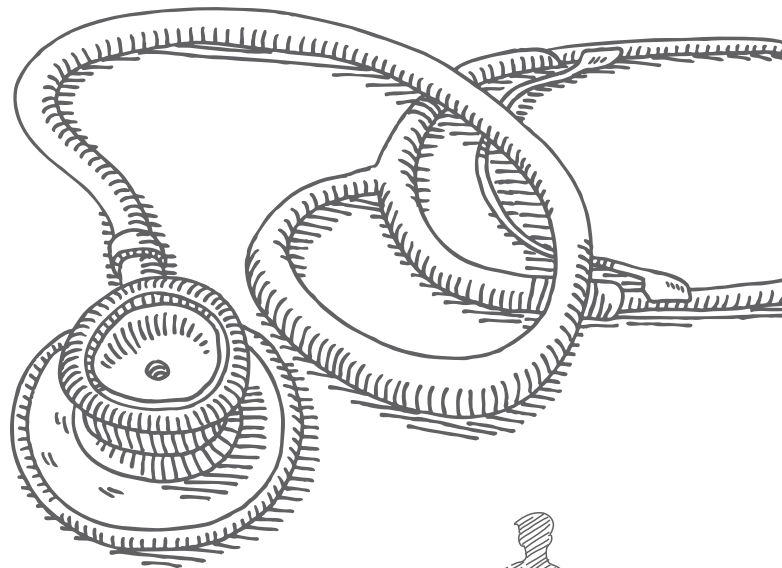


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## What happens **after** the visit is over

Depending on your child's age, you may have well-child visits every few weeks, months, or yearly (see the AAP Schedule of Well-Child Care Visits link below). To help you create a plan for when you get home, write a "to do" list during the visit. List tasks that you can easily fit into your life like "keep healthy snacks in the house" or "turn off the TV or computer an hour before bedtime." Also include tasks to follow up on such as "make an appointment with the specialist" or "talk with teachers about special education services." Clarify with your health care team each task on your "to do" list so that you know exactly what to do and when to do it.

Your well-child visit isn't the only time you can talk with your health care team. If questions arise after your visit is over, call the office and ask the team for answers. Or if you follow up on a task you discussed during your well-child visit, call the office to update the team. Keeping your health care team up to date helps make the most out of your next well-child visit.



## A special note for **parents of teenagers**

The well-child visit has a special meaning for teenagers. It is a chance for teens to build responsibility for their own health and wellness. By ensuring teens follow the same steps and regularly attend these yearly visits, you set the stage for their independence. Typically, teens can expect to have one-on-one time with their health care professional. Teens need to prepare for visits so that they can engage in conversations with their health care team and then follow up on tasks to promote their overall well-being. As teens practice these skills, they learn how to promote their own lifelong health. You also continue to support them by encouraging healthful habits at home such as eating nutritious foods, getting a good night's sleep, and paying attention to their emotional well-being.



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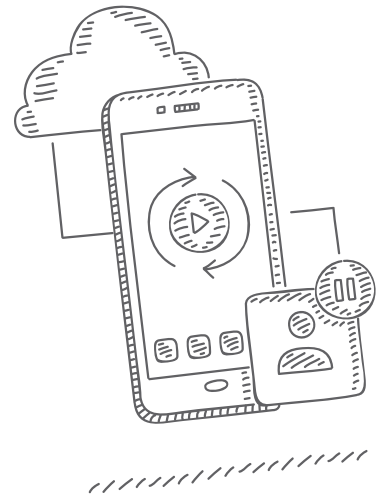
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## Resources

From [HealthyChildren.org](http://HealthyChildren.org)

- AAP Schedule of Well-Child Care Visits: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/Pages/Well-Child-Care-A-Check-Up-for-Success.aspx>
- Recommended Immunization Schedules: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx>
- Milestones Matter: 10 to Watch for by Age 5: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/Pages/Milestones-Matter.aspx>
- Back to School, Back to the Doctor: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/Back-to-School-Back-to-the-Doctor.aspx>
- Next Stop Adulthood: Tips for Parents: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Next-Stop-Adulthood-Tips-For-Parents.aspx>

Well-Visit Planner: <https://www.wellvisitplanner.org/>



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