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## YOUR CHILD AT 5-7 YEARS

### I. DIET

- A. Your child will want to make more of their own food choices. Influences from friends and television can make healthy eating a challenge. Continue to limit junk food and to offer healthful snacks instead.
- B. Family meals are important. Not only do they encourage healthy eating, but also they are a good way to spend time together as a family.
- C. Your child needs at least 800 mg of calcium a day. Good sources are low fat milk, yogurt, cheese, and juice with calcium. If your child is not getting enough calcium in their diet, then you may give them a supplement such as Tums, or Viactiv, or Caltrate. One regular Tums has 200mg of calcium, Viactiv has 500mg, and Caltrate has 600mg.

### II. SLEEP

- A. Your child needs at least 8-10 hours of sleep a night. A consistent bedtime is important.
- B. Bad dreams and night terrors are common in this age group. Remain calm no matter how frightened your child appears. Dreams are generally not as troubling by age 8.
- C. Bedwetting may still be occurring at this age. Some children do not yet have sufficient control of their bladders during sleep. If your child's bedwetting is upsetting you or your child, ask us for help.

### III. DEVELOPMENT

- A. Children of this age still think and learn primarily by experience, and they don't have a good understanding of things that will happen in the future. Fact and fantasy mingle easily: the world is seen as the child wishes it to be, and not as it actually is. Your child needs rules to guide their behavior and information to make good choices and decisions. Remember that you are the parent and "I said so" may be a good enough reason.
- B. Try to read with your child every day.
- C. Family chores (making their bed, setting the table, clearing their plate) are a good way to help your child feel important and "grown-up". Starting good habits of being helpful is easier at this age.
- D. Discipline with consistent limits is important. Children respond best to positive reinforcement of good behaviors. Time-out and loss of privileges can be used for negative behavior. Children should never be spanked.
- E. Regular exercise is important. Structured sports and/or active play outside are good habits to develop now.
- F. At this age your child is too young for their own cell phone.

### IV. SAFETY

- A. Your child should be in a belt positioning booster seat until the weight of 80 pounds.
- B. Helmets are essential every time your child skates, rides their bike or scooter, skis or snowboards --- no exceptions!
- C. Remind your child about street safety. Children are not ready to cross even a slightly busy street alone until 10 years of age.
- D. Continue to talk to your child about strangers. Remember that unknown teenagers are strangers. Encourage them to tell you about anyone that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- E. Always use sunscreen when outdoors: an SPF of 30 is usually sufficient but will need to be re-applied after swimming.
- F. Being around grown-ups that smoke is not only bad for your child's health, but puts them at increased risk of becoming smokers themselves. Teaching your child to respect their body and keep it healthy now is an important part of being able to say no to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs later.
- G. Continue to stress the importance of twice daily tooth brushing and regular dental check-ups.
- H. Try to limit total television, video, and computer time to 1-2 hours/day.
- I. Firearms should be stored unloaded and locked with ammunition stored separately. Teach your child not to touch a gun and to immediately tell an adult if they find one. Ask if guns are safely stored at places your child visits.
- J. Communicate the importance of fire safety and not playing with matches. Teach them to STOP, DROP, ROLL, and COVER (the face with their hands) should their clothes catch on fire. Practice fire drills and discuss having 2 means of exiting the home. You will need to establish a meeting place (tree/mailbox) outside the home so that you can ensure that everyone is safely out of the house.

### V. OTHER

- A. We recommend annual well child exams.
- B. MMR and Varicella boosters are given at the 5 year visit. After that visit, annual flu shots are the only immunizations needed until age 10.