
YOUR CHILD AT 8-10 YEARS

I. DIET

- A. Continue to encourage healthful eating habits. Snacking while watching T.V. is strongly associated with obesity. Your child now requires 1300 mg of calcium which can be achieved with 4 servings of low fat milk, yogurt, cheese, or juice with calcium. You can give your child a calcium supplement (one regular Tums has 200 mg. of calcium, Viactiv has 500 mg calcium, and Caltrate has 600mg) if not enough is consumed in the diet.
- B. Meals together as a family are important. Even though you are busy, you should try to eat together at least a few times a week. This helps keep your child connected to the family.

II. SLEEP

- A. Your child needs at least 8-10 hours of sleep a night.
- B. Maintaining a consistent bedtime, even on weekends, helps develop healthy sleep habits.

III. DEVELOPMENT

- A. This is a period of slowed physical growth when usually a lot of energy goes into learning. Children of this age love to learn facts, especially strange ones, and they want to know how things work.
- B. Friends become very important. A child's self-image is determined in part by the extent to which they are accepted by peers. As a result, some children will have trouble making independent choices.
- C. Continue to read with your child every day.
- D. Regular exercise is important for the development of a strong healthy body and is a good way to prevent obesity now and in the future.
- E. The earliest that children should have cell phones is 11-12 years of age.
- F. Teach your child to deal with stress. Make sure she knows that you are on her side. Let him problem solve initially on his own, don't rush to intervene. Talk to us if your child is showing signs of stress such as: sleep problems, returning to less mature behaviors, separation anxiety, new bedwetting, irritability or anger outbursts, frequent aches and pains, or school avoidance.

IV. SAFETY

- A. Now that your child is 8-years-old you can probably use a regular lap belt. If your child is small for their age and not at least 60 pounds, you should continue to use a booster seat. Children are safest in the back seat. Most passenger airbags are dangerous to people who weigh less than 100 pounds and are less than 5 ft. 3 in. tall.
- B. Children are not developmentally ready to judge car speed and distance to safely cross a street until 10 years of age. They aren't ready to use a lawn mower until age 12 years.
- C. A properly fitting helmet should be mandatory every time your child skates, skateboards, rides a bike or scooter, skis or snowboards.
- D. Early sun exposure contributes to the development of skin cancer later. Using a sunscreen regularly can help prevent this damage.
- E. Continue to talk to your child about going places with strangers and about making good choices. Practice ways to say no with your child. Describe situations that may make your child feel uncomfortable: for example, being invited to ride a bike where you do not allow your child to go, or being offered medicine or other unfamiliar substances. Talk with your child about the dangers of using tobacco, alcohol, and drugs and make sure that your child knows that you don't approve of their use. If you smoke, try again to quit. If not for your health, then for your child's.
- F. Violent video games are associated with increased aggressive behavior. All video games should be rated E (everyone). Limit screen time so that your child can exercise and develop other interests.
- G. In a study of boys 8-12 years of age who were placed in a room with a hidden gun, 76% of them handled it and 48% pulled the trigger! Keep reminding your child to never handle a gun. If you own a firearm, make sure that it is stored unloaded and locked with ammunition locked up separately.
- H. Monitor your child's activity on the web. Your computer should have parental controls set to limit unwanted websites.

V. OTHER

- A. We recommend annual well child exams.
- B. At age 10 our office policy is to assess a Blood Count; Cholesterol and Vitamin D levels, and a Varicella (Chicken Pox) titer (if only one dose of vaccine was given in the past).