

DUNWOODY PEDIATRICS

CHILD CARE FROM 4 TO 5 YEARS

Date: _____

Weight: _____ Percentile: _____ Height: _____ Percentile: _____

Immunizations received today: Dtap _____ Polio _____ MMR _____ Prevnar _____

Hepatitis A _____ Hepatitis B _____ Hib _____ Varicella _____

NUTRITION

◆ **Milk/Dairy Products:** 2-3 servings a day (6-8 oz. per serving). Offer 1% or less. Other milk products include yogurt, cottage cheese, pudding and ice cream or frozen yogurt. 2 oz of cheese is equivalent to 8 oz. milk. Calcium requirement is 800mg.

◆ **Meat/Protein:** 2-3 servings per day. A serving size is 2 ounces (4 Tbsp). Lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, peas, eggs, or peanut butter are all good choices. You get the same amount of protein from 1 oz. meat as from 2 T. peanut butter, 1 oz. cheese, 1 egg, or ½ cup cooked beans or peas.

◆ **Fruits/Vegetables:** 5-7 servings of each a day, a serving size being ½ cup or 3 Tbsp. Try for 1 serving high in Vitamin A, such as peaches, broccoli, carrots, squash, or sweet potatoes and 1 high in Vitamin C, such as broccoli, spinach or Vitamin C enriched juice. Limit juice intake to 4-6 ounces a day.

◆ **Breads/Cereals:** 6 servings per day, with a serving size being 1 slice bread, ½ cup cereal, or 1/2 cup pasta.

- Your child should be good company at meals, and be ready to learn basic table manners. Explain the rules and then model them. They will behave as they see the rest of the family behaving at the table.

- Try not to use food as a reward for good behavior, praise is preferable.

- Whole peanuts and hard candy remain choking hazard until your child is 5 or 6.

DENTAL HEALTH

Brush your child's teeth daily using a small, soft toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of non-fluoridated toothpaste. You may allow your child to "brush" on their own, then "assist" them. Continue regular 6 month dental visits for cleaning and routine checkups.

SLEEP

Resisting bedtime is common. They are afraid of "missing something". They need 8 - 12 hours of sleep each night. The afternoon nap is usually disappearing due to preschool and other activities. If possible, try to give your child a "quiet time" to allow you both a break. Four-year-olds are magical thinkers, and they use their imaginations in all phases of their world. As a result, you may see an increase in nightmares for a short while as this age has difficulty separating fantasy from reality. If your child does wake up in the middle of the night afraid and crying, try holding them, talking about the dream, and staying with them until they are calm enough to fall back asleep. Rest assured these are a normal developmental stage and will disappear naturally as your child grows older.

ELIMINATION

They may still require help after a bowel movement or remembering to wash their hands.

Incorporating fruits (fresh or dried), vegetables, and grains into their diet will help minimize any constipation problems. Some 4 year-olds are able to stay dry all night while others are not. The

process required for successful night time bladder control takes longer to develop in some children. They should not be punished, as they are not wetting the bed on purpose. Limiting their fluid intake and waking them to use the bathroom probably won't help the situation but reassuring them that these mishaps are "no big deal" will help them feel better about it.

DEVELOPMENT/PLAY

Their vocabulary is increasing, including words you may not be happy about. Four-year-olds are using pronouns (I, you, me), able to understand some prepositions, count several objects, tell exaggerated stories, ask questions constantly and identify a few colors. They have a great imagination, and enjoy art supplies, musical instruments, and child tool kits. Make books available to them and read to them, however, this is not an age that you have to push them to read. Sexual curiosity is common at this age and you may notice this being demonstrated through role playing. This is normal and will not become a problem unless you make it an issue. Your child is in a phase of associative play, where they enjoy playing with other children and being dramatic and imitative. They can resolve minor conflicts but still need parental supervision. Imaginary playmates are not uncommon at this age and usually disappear as they approach school age. Four-year-olds are emotional, can be temperamental and may have mood swings. This is where preschool or a period of time in an organized child care setting may help to reinforce appropriate behavior and play interaction. You must teach them what is/is not acceptable behavior. The only way they will learn to set their own limits later is by having you set reasonable limits for them now. Remember to reward good behavior more often than punishing bad, and to avoid physical punishment. Encourage your child to express their emotions through words instead of aggressive actions. Time out is still an effective method of discipline for this age group and should last about four minutes.

SAFETY

- Supervise your child closely whenever they are playing in the driveway or near the street.
- Enforce bicycle safety: wear an approved helmet, have an appropriate bike size and begin learning traffic rules.
- Motor vehicle safety remains critical and is still the greatest risk to your child's health. By law your preschooler must remain in a car seat or booster seat in the backseat until they are 6 years old or 57 inches tall.
- Teach your child their full name, address, phone number and 911. Teach them who appropriate people are to ask for help if injured or lost and teach them never to get into a strange car.
- Check your smoke detectors twice a year when daylight savings time changes are made.
- Continue 6 month checkups to the dentist.
- Continue daily use of sunblock.

Your child's next well visit should be at 5 years of age.

Additional Resources for Parents

Your Four Year Old, Ames and Ilg (1980)

Caring For Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 (4th ed.), AAP (2004)

1/15/06