

Well child visits—A key to healthy kids

It's natural to bring a child to the doctor when he or she is sick. But why would you want to visit your health care provider when your child is feeling well?

Childhood is a time of rapid growth and change. And for that reason, having your child seen on a regular basis helps keep him healthy and on track.

Well child visits:

Help prevent problems

At each visit, your health care team will help to see if your child's shots are current, if she's eating healthy foods and if she's feeling safe. The doctor also looks for clues to find budding health problems early on.

Track progress and growth

It's normal to wonder if your child is on track with his height, weight, and mental and social milestones. Your health care team will assess all those things and record them in your child's file. They will also observe how your child learns.

Are times to talk through your concerns

You may want to write down your questions ahead of your visit and talk to your doctor about things like how your child sleeps, eats and gets along with others. You can ask about his growth, learning style or other things on your mind.

Create a team approach

Health care is best when you and your team work side by side. When you come for well child visits, your team gets to know your child better and can provide more efficient care. They can also suggest other sources to help your child grow into a healthy adult.

When should your child be seen?

Healthychildren.org suggests a well child visit at each of these ages:

- 2-5 days old
- 1 month old
- 2 months old
- 4 months old
- 6 months old
- 9 months old
- 15 months old
- 18 months old
- 2 years old
- 2 ½ years old
- Once per year from age 3 to adult

Your doctor may suggest more visits based on your child's health.

Don't wait until your child is sick to see a doctor. Your doctor wants to get to know your child when he is healthy—and to help keep him that way.