



Counseling Recommendations for School Children

Physicians and volunteers at DHC understand that raising a child is hard work, especially ensuring that they are healthy, active and hardworking. This flyer provides some health tips for you to consider as the school year gets underway.

Healthy Diet

- Encourage eating fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads and cereals, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, beans, fish and lean meats.
- Discourage high sugar, fast foods, highly-processed foods and excessive salt intake.

Screen Time

- Children ages 2-5 should have 1 hour or less per day.
- Use a family media plan for school-age children such as: www.healthychildren.org/mediauseplan
- Avoid screen time an hour before sleep and keep screens out of bedrooms

Injury Prevention

- Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death in school age children. Counseling is encouraged for safety in:
 - **Home:** Smoke detector use, fire escape plans and carbon monoxide detectors.
 - **Vehicles:** Booster seat and seat belt usage, education on how to safely cross streets, not riding in the bed of a pick-up truck and no driving all-terrain vehicles before age 16.
 - **Water:** Children age 5 and up should learn to swim. Adult supervision and floatation devices are needed near water.
 - **Sports:** Appropriate safety equipment is a must. (i.e. helmets for biking, snowboarding, skiing, horseback riding, skateboarding, riding a scooter, etc.
 - **Firearms:** Any firearms in the home should be securely locked using gun safes and trigger locks.
 - **Sunscreen:** When spending time in the sun, use a lotion with an SPF level of 15 or higher.

Exercise

- 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day
- This may include running, walking, basketball, biking, and swimming, muscle strengthening activities such as push-ups and pull-ups, OR bone strengthening activities such as volleyball and resistance band usage.

Sleep

- For school age children, 9-12 hours of sleep is recommended
- Inadequate sleep may lead to behavioral issues, high blood pressure, obesity and poor concentration.

Dental Hygiene

- Brush teeth twice a day with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing fluoride
- Floss daily
- Follow up with a dentist twice each year for checkup and cleaning.

High Risk Behaviors

- Discuss the dangers associated with tobacco and drug use.
- Education or brief counseling should begin at 11 years old.

Sexually Active Adolescents

- Intensive behavioral counseling regarding sexually transmitted diseases should be considered
- Conduct screening if needed
- All adolescents should be screened for HIV at the age of 15 years.