



11-12 Year Handout

QUESTIONS

1. Has the patient ever fainted or passed out with exercise, exertion, and/or emotional stress?
2. Has anyone in the family had seizures, fainting (syncope), sudden death, drowning, and/or unexplained accidents?
3. Is there any history of chest pain or shortness of breath with exertion?
4. Has the patient ever had a concussion or serious head injury?
5. Is there a family history of high blood cholesterol?
6. Is there a family history of heart attacks, angina, stroke, or bypass surgery in men younger than 55, or women younger than 60?
7. Is there any family history of anxiety or depression?
8. Has your child had an Impact test?

HEALTH HABITS

Children should eat a well-balanced diet and have breakfast before going to school. Avoid excess pop, candy, chips and other junk foods. If your child needs a snack, encourage fruits and vegetables for nibbling and water between meals. Children should get a minimum of three servings of calcium daily. Habits children develop at this age will affect their eating habits the rest of their life, so get them off to a good healthy start early. Encourage water as the beverage of choice. Avoid excess pop, Gatorade or other sugared beverages. Remember, children imitate their parents, so be sure to set a good example.

Children should be brushing their teeth regularly. Ideally that should be after every meal, but a minimum of once in the morning and once before bed. Dental visits are recommended every 6 months.

Encourage regular physical activity. Consider community youth and sports and family physical activities. Children may also enjoy extracurricular activities such as playing a musical instrument, school clubs, hobbies, etc. Practice bicycle and skating safety. Children at this age may be involved in more than one demanding physical sport, resulting in multiple stresses on developing joints, tendons and muscles. Be sure your child does a thorough warm-up prior to exercise and a cool-down after exercise. American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against playing on trampolines, due to the risks of serious injury.

Limit TV, computer, and video game time to no more than 2 hours daily. Know the content of the programs/games your children watch. We also strongly discourage televisions in a child's bedroom, as this can lead to many problems as the child gets older. Encourage no screens within an hour of bedtime

(i.e., no TV, cell phone, computer, iPad) and a quiet activity such as reading. Research has shown that ‘blue light’ from screens often interferes with production of melatonin, which helps signal the body that it’s time to sleep. Encourage other quiet inside activities instead, such as reading or other hobbies. If possible, obtain a library card for your child.

BEHAVIOR

Establish consistent rules at home with respect to TV, bedtime, helping with the chores, keeping one’s room neat, etc. As your child becomes more independent, allow him to make *age-appropriate* decisions and selections when possible.

Spend active time with your child, daily if possible, and show interest in his school activities. Praising and encouraging your child’s activities will help bolster his self-esteem. Communication with your child takes work, but an investment of time at this age will pay off in the long run. Encourage healthy and realistic body image. At this age, children are often going through puberty and are feeling uncomfortable about their bodies. Seeing so many air-brushed and unrealistic images on TV, Internet and popular media contributes to this feeling. Realize your pre-teen will be spending more time with his/her peers and may be a little more private during these years, but he/she still needs you! Keep the lines of communication open and let them know you are available to talk. *Realize the importance of being a parental role model.*

Get to know your child’s friends. Encourage them to invite their friends to your home, so you can spend some time with them (even if just observing their play habits).

Children at this age often have questions about changes related to puberty, sex education, and the start of menses (periods) for girls. Many schools discuss these topics, but we advise parents to have a conversation with their children about these topics as well. If you need help or are unsure what kinds of things to discuss, we’d be happy to assist you. We offer a puberty class for girls at regular intervals throughout the year, titled “Puberty, Seriously?” We generally have the day/time posted on our website.

SAFETY TIPS

Social Media and Cell Phone Safety

Be aware of the risks of ‘cyberbullying’ and keep the lines of communication open with your tween. Keep the computer in a common area in the home; remind him/her to keep private information private and ask about their online activities. Ask them if they’ve seen anything online that makes them uncomfortable.

Cell phone and texting can be a great way to keep in touch, and tweens certainly love texting their friends! Be careful with introducing a cell phone into your tween’s life and the potential for complications. Be aware of what he/she is texting to friends. Set firm limits on cell phone and texting usage.

Accidents are the greatest threat to the life and health of children. More school-age children die of

injuries than all other diseases combined. Yet most of these injuries can be prevented! Here are a few hints to help keep your child safe:

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Check your smoke detector (replace the batteries if necessary) and practice a fire escape plan.
- Keep a fire extinguisher near or in the kitchen.
- Use sunscreen if your child will be outside playing. We recommend an SPF of at least 30.

Prevent Drowning

Your child should be continuously supervised by a responsible adult when in or around water. Even if he knows how to swim, he is not safe alone in the water. Never let your child swim in canals or any fast-moving water.

Firearm Safety

Keep guns locked, unloaded, and ammunition stored separately.

Passive Smoke Exposure

We also caution against passive smoke exposure of any kind. Our recommendation for the health of your baby is no smoking. The more smoke your child is exposed to, the higher her chance of developing more colds, lung infections, ear infections, allergies, asthma problems, and cancer. The best thing for your child's health is for you not to smoke at all. Even if you don't smoke near your child, chemicals from smoking stay with you on your clothes and on your body. If you must smoke, smoke outside the house, never inside or in the car. Even if your child is in another room or not in the car at the moment, he will still be exposed to lingering harmful chemicals later.

Sports Safety

Be sure your child wears all the protective equipment made for the sport she plays, such as shin pads, helmets, or mouth guards.

Vehicle Safety

Children should wear seat belts. Everyone in the car should always be restrained in some manner. Children should be seated in the back seat until the age of 12.

We *do not* advise buying motorized vehicles for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against the use of all-terrain vehicles by children less than 16 years old.

Bike Safety

Don't let your child ride a bicycle near traffic. At this age, children should not be riding at dusk or after dark. Bring the bike in when the sun starts to set. Have your child wear a bicycle helmet while riding a bicycle.

Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol

This is an appropriate age to start discussing tobacco, drugs, and alcohol. Children are exposed to these as early as elementary school from peers, and it's important they know how to respond when confronted in such an event. This is something you should discuss periodically throughout childhood.

WALK-IN HOURS

We now offer no-appointment necessary Walk-In Hours, at all offices:

Weekday Mornings, 8:15 to 9:30am at Pleasant Hills and Squirrel Hill/Greenfield

Weekday Evenings, 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday at Pleasant Hills.

Monday & Thursday at Squirrel Hill/Greenfield.

All Day, Every Week Day at Cranberry/Seven Fields

These hours are to address routine health problems such as sore throat, cold symptoms, fever, rash, and ear pain. They are not designed to evaluate chronic problems. If your child is older than 4 months and has had symptoms fewer than 3 days, you can be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

If you feel you need additional advice between regular check-ups, you can post questions to our Facebook page or telephone us during office hours. Facebook, where we answer questions sometimes as quickly as in a few minutes, is a great place to ask about general, non-pressing issues. For more detailed and pressing health issues, it's best to call. Either way, we're always happy to provide counseling and guidance. (It's both our job and our pleasure!)

When calling after office hours, your call will be answered by an answering machine. If you have a concern that can't wait for regular office hours, please leave your name, your child's name (with spelling), and your phone number, and we'll return your call usually within an hour or so. If you have an emergency that requires an ambulance or paramedics, call 911 *first*. If you have an emergency that can't wait for a call back and need to have the doctor urgently paged (such as seizures, respiratory illness with labored breathing, suspected dehydration, or similar conditions), the recorded message will give you the answering service's phone number, and they can reach the doctor on call for the emergency.

AND REMEMBER...

We have a wonderful, 24/7/365 resource for parents at our **Kids Plus Facebook Page**. Like us on Facebook, and follow along with our great Kids Plus Social Media Community!

We look forward to seeing you next year!

