

# *Mendon Pediatrics*

## 7-11 Year Visit

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### Nutrition

- Learn the Food Pyramid as a family and practice healthy eating choices together. Remember that our children learn much more from our behavior than from what we tell them to do. For more information on the pyramid visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.
- Allow children to help plan, shop and prepare meals.
- Watch what foods you have in the house. It's much harder to eat junk food if it's not there. Fruits and vegetables make great snacks!
- Use low fat dairy products.

### Healthy Habits

- Encourage routine physical activity. Play ball, ride a bike, take a walk. Make it a habit to make physical activity a family routine. Keep moving and keep your hearts healthy.
- Minimize sedentary activities such as television, video games and computer time. Make a rule that all of these be lumped into "screen time" of no more than 1-2 hours per day. Choose what you watch wisely. Encourage children to participate in making a weekly TV-time budget. Parents should monitor the shows, video games and online use of their children.
- See a dentist twice yearly. Brush teeth twice daily and floss daily.
- Talk openly now about the risks of cigarette/alcohol/drug use and set good examples. Let your children know that they can talk to you about these issues which they will face soon. Let them know that you trust them to make wise decisions and begin fostering those decision-making skills now.
- Read! Read together, read out loud. Exercise your brains!
- Prepare a plan for your child in case of loss. Review your life insurance coverage to make sure it provides for your child and your will should include all members of your family. Also discuss a plan of guardianship for your child.

### Behavior/Development

- Establish rules and guidelines. Enforce logical consequences if they are not followed. Help your child to be responsible for his or her actions and the consequences that follow.
- Encourage age appropriate decision making.
- Comfortably answer questions about sex. It is better for our children to learn about this from us rather than the media or their peers. Give your child very specific guidelines of physical contact to follow when they are in a relationship. Because children are very concrete thinkers, they need very specific do's and don'ts. See recommended books below. Review these in advance before introducing them to your child.
- Prepare your child for the changes which will occur during puberty.

### Safety

- Always wear your seat belt. Children under 12 are safer in the back seat. Children under 80 lbs. may be safer in a booster seat.
- Always wear a helmet while biking, rollerblading, skateboarding or skiing. We aren't very good at repairing damaged brains!
- Use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher when in the sun. Keep reapplying every 2 hours or after getting out of the water.
- Never swim alone, always have a buddy. Learn how to swim if you don't already know how.

- Be aware of dangerous activities such as huffing, the choking game, and over the counter cold preparations, that are all used by some children in order to get a high. These activities can seriously injure your child and/or cause death. Keep an open dialog between you and your child to be sure that your child is not being influenced by peer pressure.
- Guns are dangerous. Every 2 hours in the US someone's child is killed by a gun. Guns in the home substantially increase the risk of suicide and homicide. If you have a gun in your home, make certain that the gun is securely locked and stored separately from ammunition. Teach your child never to play with guns.
- Recognize the risk of leaving your child home alone. Most children are not developmentally prepared for this responsibility at this age.

### Future Visits

As your child enters adolescence, we will encourage them to begin assuming responsibility for their health. We will often perform part of the interview and examination with the parents out of the exam room. A chaperone is available upon request. It is most helpful if we know of your concerns, if any, in advance. We maintain confidentiality regarding our discussions with adolescent patients. We will inform parents if an adolescent is posing a threat to him/herself or someone else. We encourage you to maintain open communication with your adolescent.

### Suggested Readings

*Caring for Your School-Age Child: Ages 5 to 12*, by The American Academy of Pediatrics

*Caring for Your Adolescent: Ages 12 to 21*, by The American Academy of Pediatrics

*Your Ten to Fourteen Year Old*, by Louise Bates Ames, Ph.D

*How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

*It's Perfectly Natural*, by Planned Parenthood (a well done book on sex, geared towards pre- and early adolescents).

*Raising a Child Conservatively in a Sexually Permissive World*, by Sol Gordon, Ph.D and Judith Gordon, MSW

*This is an important period in which to foster the growth of our children to becoming independent individuals capable of making wise decisions for themselves and accepting responsibility for their actions.  
Let them know that you are there for them, always.*