



## **Important Points for the 4 Year Visit**

### **Nutrition:**

The four year old continues in a period of relatively slow growth. Average wt. gain per year is only 3-4 lbs. Hungry and in a hurry? When it comes to food, families want convenience. It's no surprise that fast-food restaurants are so popular. However, some fast foods supply a lot of fat and calories. These tips help you to get the most from foods that are fast:

- Share: split an order of fries with other family members.
- Choose food-group foods: in combination meals, substitute fruit juice or 2% milk for soft drinks.
- Balance high-fat foods with low fat foods: order a small hamburger and a salad for your child. Kids like fresh fruit, carrot sticks and broccoli florets.
- Most fast-food spots offer low-fat choices: salads, plain baked potatoes, chili, 2% milk, frozen yogurt, English muffins, and grilled chicken sandwiches.
- Supermarkets offer a variety of nutritious foods that are fast. Ready made deli sandwiches; fresh fruits and the salad bar are some "fast foods" from the grocery store.

### **Development:**

Pedals tricycle, hops on one foot, walks up and down stairs with alternating gait, draws circle and cross, draws 3-6 part person, cuts with scissors, may have an imaginary friend, recognizes some letters, uses full sentences, fully intelligible to strangers, asks "why", "when", can count to 10, knows name, recognizes gender, able to wait turn, share, able to put on clothes, 90-95% are toilet trained but only 75% are night trained.

### **Touchpoints:**

Always remember the positive effects of praise; your child's developmental task at 4 years is to take initiative and to succeed. The 4 year old really enjoys playmates. At this stage, your preschooler will begin to play cooperatively with others. Now is the time to provide some type of structured learning environment in preparation for kindergarten next year. Examples include preschool, Mother's Day out programs, or Sunday school. Continue to read books to your child and limit TV to 1 hour per day. Provide your child with clearly stated limits along with an explanation of the consequences if rules are broken. When disciplining, try to separate your child and her behavior "I love you but I do not like it when you touch the DVD player".

### **Safety:**

- Continue to use a booster seat until the vehicle lap-and-shoulder belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet and 9 inches and between 8-12 years and 40 pounds. Make sure it is properly secured in the back seat.
- Some 4 year olds can be taught his or her full name, address and phone number.
- If guns are in your house, lock the guns and ammunition separately, and hide the keys where your child cannot reach them. Kids need to understand that guns are not toys and learn how to behave around them.
- Enroll in swim lessons and remember that knowing how to "swim" does not make your child water-safe at this age. All pools must be gated. Always use sunscreen when your child is outside playing or swimming.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check that they work properly every month. Keep your 4 year old's environment free of smoke: no smoking in the home or car. Conduct fire drills.
- Teach your child rules for interacting with strangers, either on the phone or at the door. Develop a secret codeword that only the parents and child know can be used with another adult in case of extreme emergency.
- Keep your 4 year old away from moving machinery, lawn mowers, overhead garage doors, driveways and streets. ALWAYS supervise when your child is playing near the street.

### **What to expect during this visit:**

- The following immunizations will be given today: Dtap, IPV, MMR and Varivax. Please refer to the "After the Shots" handout for further instructions. Other screening includes vision, hearing, and blood pressure. Please let us know if your family has a history of high blood pressure, high cholesterol or triglycerides.
- We will discuss your child's growth and development and any other concerns that you may have. Please prepare and bring in questions for your next visit at 5 years. Your child's next immunization will be a tetanus, pertussis, and meningitis booster between 11-12 years of age.