

Your Child's Health Maintenance Schedule

Even healthy children should regularly visit the doctor. How often they go depends on their age and general health.

Parents often find it hard to keep up with checkups and immunization schedules. One way to make it easier is to keep complete records on the child's medical history. Having a regular doctor helps to keep information current, and it also helps the child to feel more secure and comfortable when the doctor's office is a familiar place.

Schedule for Medical Care

Stage of Life	Schedule
Pre-Delivery	The American Academy of Pediatrics urges parents to meet your baby's pediatrician before the baby is born so you can get acquainted and get questions answered.
Newborn	Your pediatrician should examine your baby in the hospital. If you're discharged in less than 48 hours, schedule a doctor's visit within two days.
Infancy to 1 year	Schedule a doctor's visit at 2 to 4 weeks. After that, schedule at least four more visits at regular intervals before your baby's first birthday.
Second year	Schedule visits at 12, 15, and 18 months, or more often if recommended.
2-5 years	Schedule annual visits at 2, 3, 4, and 5 years, or more often if recommended.
6 to 21 years	Schedule visits at 6, 8, and 10 years, then annually from ages 11 to 21.

What to Expect from Medical Visits

Your doctor should:

- Administer necessary immunizations during infancy, such as:
 - pertussis (whooping cough)
 - diphtheria
 - tetanus (lockjaw)
 - polio
 - measles
 - mumps
 - rubella (German measles)
 - hepatitis B
 - Haemophilus influenzae type b
 - pneumococcal infections
 - varicella (chickenpox).
- Review your child's medical history and ask your child how he or she is feeling physically and emotionally, as well as how things are going at school.
- Conduct a complete physical exam. Starting with the first exam after birth, your child's length, weight, and head circumference (the distance around the head) should be measured so a growth chart can be maintained.
- Perform screenings for things such as vision, hearing, anemia, lead, cholesterol, urinary abnormality, tuberculosis infection, and certain inherited disorders to make sure growth and development are on track.
- Administer booster immunizations and any newly available immunizations as needed.
- Discuss with you your child's overall health, diet, and well-being. No topic should be off limits and should include things like relationships with parents, family, and the community, sexual development, and the potential for injury and/or violence. Such frank discussions might reveal learning disabilities or behavioral problems and allow your doctor to make recommendations.