



7–8 Year Preventive Exam

Development & Behavior

Your child is more interactive, involved with friends, and developing emotionally. 7 and 8-year olds are moving towards mature independence and autonomy. At this age she has developed a conscience that allows for understanding of rules, relationships, and social rules. Experiences with school and social activities foster individualization. Her peer group grows in importance and she will identify with children of the same gender who have similar interests and abilities. Your child will likely encounter beliefs and practices in her peer group that differ from those of your family. She will try to make sense of the differences, which may lead to conflict in beliefs and values.

At this age your child should have household responsibilities which help to foster a sense of personal competence. Responsibilities such as making her bed, picking up clothes, setting the table, and helping with meals are some examples that can not only help the family but also help her become confident in attempting activities that require increased responsibility. School performance remains a good marker of a child's development and accomplishments. Success or difficulty in school may affect self-esteem in positive or negative ways.

Puberty entails dramatic changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of development. A discussion about the onset of puberty and education within the family is appropriate at this age and developmental stage. Answer questions simply and honestly at the level of your child's understanding. Puberty may begin at this age in some girls, starting with breast development.

Media

Inappropriate or excessive media use has been associated with attention problems, impaired sleep, school difficulties, vision changes, and obesity. Any media exposure should be limited to 90 minutes per day and be of good quality. Check out www.common sense media.org for recommendations. Do not use TV, phone or iPad as a substitute for interaction with your child. Turn off devices during meals. Children at this age are naive when it comes to the digital world. Provide parental supervision and monitoring to ensure he is not exposed to inappropriate material. Use internet safety tools with filtering to limit access to appropriate material. Start the discussion of the risks of sharing personal information.

Children at this age do not need their own phone; we embrace the "wait until 8th" campaign. More information can be found at <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>. Read to your child every day or ask him to read to you. Engage your child in board games and encourage him to play with favorite toys creatively and to release energy by running, climbing, swinging, sliding, and jumping. Current recommendations are for children this age to be physically active for 60 minutes or more per day.

School

A child that arrives to school fed and rested is ready to learn and performs better. Give her a healthy breakfast and establish bedtime routines to get at least 10–11 hours of sleep. After-school activities, sports, social activities, and clubs can place a big demand on your child's time. Be cautious not to over schedule her and allow for some unstructured time. Stresses, changes in family, loss in

families, or family violence can contribute to poor performance.

Diet

Continue healthy eating habits for your child. Give him a healthy breakfast every day. Help him recognize and respond to hunger and fullness cues. Do not allow him to snack in front of a TV or device. Have nutritious foods and drinks readily available and the expected options for meals and snacks in your house. Limit food and drinks high in calories, fats, sugars and refined grains which are low in nutrients. Make sure your child gets calcium & Vitamin D containing foods or beverages. 12–16 oz of low-fat or fat-free milk a day plus an additional serving of low-fat yogurt or cheese is recommended. If your child does not drink milk or other dairy products then aim for foods and beverages fortified with calcium and Vitamin D.

Oral health

Use a soft toothbrush with a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste twice a day. Aim for 2 minutes per day with flossing once a day. Children at this age are still working on their dexterity, so you should still brush her teeth after to clean them thoroughly. Your child should be seeing a dentist regularly and have fluoride applied every 6 months. Limit your child's consumption of sweetened beverages and snacks with sugar. Discuss the importance of taking care of her teeth. If your child is playing contact sports, have her wear a mouth guard.

Safety

Keep firearms stored unloaded and locked in a safe with ammunition stored separately. Do not show your child where you have stored the firearm, ammunition, or key. Children simply do not understand how dangerous firearms can be despite your warnings. Exposure to second hand smoke greatly increases the risk of heart and lung diseases in your child. For your health as well as your child's health, please stop smoking. Vapor from e-cigarettes is also harmful, so avoid second hand exposure by not vaping or smoking around your child or in the car.

Your child should be using a belt-positioning booster-seat. The booster seat should be used, regardless of age, until he is 4'9" tall. This positions him correctly with the seat-belt crossing his chest rather than his neck and the lap belt across his hips rather than his abdomen. The correct position of the seat-belt is important in prevention of serious injuries. Children should not ride in the front seat until 13 years old. Your own safe driving behaviors are important as well. Do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and do not text or use mobile devices while driving. Children should use a properly fitted, approved helmet every time when riding a bike or skating.

It is extremely important to supervise your child around any body of water. If you have a pool, it should be fully enclosed and equipped with self-closing gates. Even for better swimmers, one parent should be assigned as "water watcher," whose eyes and attention do not leave the swimmer. Never leave a child in charge of other children and have clear hand-offs between "water watchers." REMEMBER, IT ONLY TAKES SECONDS TO DROWN. When outside, protective clothing should be worn and sunscreen should be applied. See the [sunscreen](#) page in the parent information section of our website for more information.

What to expect at this visit

No immunizations are scheduled for this visit but Flu vaccine may be given if in season. See our [Medication Dosing Guide](#) for recommended dosing of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

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