

**Be sure your child's immunizations are up-to-date!**

Immunizations are the most important way to protect your child against serious diseases. Congratulations if your child's immunizations are up-to-date! Your child will meet the immunization requirements for both child care and school as long as she has had all the recommended vaccines. If she hasn't, now is a great time to catch-up. During an outbreak of a disease that she has not been fully immunized against, she may be required to stay home from child care or preschool.

Keeping immunizations current is also important for you, your household members and people who care for your child. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you get a flu shot every year?
- Have you received a pertussis booster (Tdap)?
- Do you have your own immunization record card?
- Are your child care providers vaccinated?

Ask your doctor or nurse about immunizations recommended for adults. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/adult-schedule.htm>.

**Hand washing – do it right and do it often!**

Germs that cause many illnesses can pass from your child's hands to his mouth. It is important to always wash his hands:

- before eating
- after coughing or sneezing into his hands
- after using the toilet
- after playing outside
- after playing with pets
- after coming home from child care or preschool

Teach your child to cough or sneeze into the bend of his elbow, instead of into his hands.



Wash your hands with your child to show him it is important. Watch to be sure he does a good job.

- Use soap and warm water. (Only use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.)
- Wash for about 20 seconds. (Sing the ABC Song all the way through to make sure you've washed long enough.)
- Rinse hands well and dry.

**Your child learns from watching you**

What you **do** is just as important as what you **say**. As a parent, you teach your child many things by talking to her. However, she also learns from watching and copying you and her older brothers and sisters.

Use the words that you want your child to use. She is likely to repeat words that you do not want her to, including swear words. Be careful what you say.

Practice healthy habits like getting regular exercise and not watching too much TV. Make sure she sees you brushing your teeth daily and washing your hands before eating. Encourage healthy eating by eating nutritious foods yourself. If you smoke, now is a great time to stop. For help quitting, call 1-877-270-STOP (7867) or visit [www.quitline.com](http://www.quitline.com).

**Read to your child – make it fun**

Many children have favorite books. Reading the same book over and over helps a child learn new words. Most children love nursery rhymes. They enjoy the strong beat and words that sound alike. Reading to your child gives you special time together. Let him pick the book and turn the pages himself. As you read, stop and talk about the story and the pictures. Don't worry if he only pays attention for a short time.

**Family Health Hotline** a program of  
**1.800.322.2588**  
 711 (tty relay) • [withinreachwa.org](http://withinreachwa.org)  


- Immunization information
- Child care referral agencies
- Affordable health insurance
- Food and nutrition assistance
- Prenatal resources
- Family planning services
- Local health clinics
- Free screenings for developmental concerns

Call the Family Health Hotline with questions about your CHILD Profile mailings.

# Keeping Your Toddler Healthy and Safe

## **Avoid food battles**

Be patient while your child finds out what foods she likes. She may like a food this week and refuse it next week! She may like foods prepared in a certain way, such as applesauce instead of apple slices. At mealtime, include at least one healthy food you know she likes.

Avoid forcing your child to eat, rewarding her for eating, or punishing her for not eating. Making your child eat a food she doesn't want will not help her learn to like it. Offer her a variety of healthy foods and let her choose from them.

If your child tells you she has finished her meal, let her stop eating. Children usually know when they have had enough. Wait until snack time to offer more food.

Try to make meals a pleasant, family time. Plan to eat together at least once a day. Talk with your children about what they did during the day.

## **Start helping your child problem-solve**

Show your toddler how you expect him to behave. This will help him learn to control his own behavior. It will also help him learn how his actions affect others.

If your child is throwing his toy truck:

1. Show him how he can play with the truck. "This is one way to play with the truck and be safe. Can you drive the truck like this?"
2. Give your child a chance to play with the truck safely. If he keeps throwing it, suggest another toy. "I can see that you want to throw, don't you? Let's get a ball we can throw and we'll put away the trucks."



## **Finding a preschool**

If you choose to send your child to preschool, it is important to start looking now for one that both you and your child like. There are many different kinds of programs to choose from. Here are a few things to do that may help you decide.

- Make a list of the things that are most important to both you and your child and take it with you.
- Visit more than one preschool, talk to staff and watch a class. Talk with other parents at the schools.
- Take your child to visit your final choices. Let her help make the decision if possible.

## **Lock up guns**

All children, even toddlers, are in danger if they play with guns. If you have guns at home, unload them. Store them in a gun safe or lock box. Lock up bullets separately. Keep keys where children cannot get them. Find out if your child's other caregivers own guns. Make sure they are stored safely.

### **Safe Gun Storage Hotline**

[www.lokitup.org](http://www.lokitup.org)

## **Keep matches and lighters out of reach**

Young children are curious about fire. Children as young as age two can start fires and hurt themselves if they play with matches and lighters. If you have lighters and matches at home, keep them out of your child's reach and out of sight. Remember that even though you tell your child to stay away from stoves, fireplaces and barbecues, you need to watch to make sure he does.

## **Start the helmet habit early**

Help your child get in the habit of wearing a helmet whenever she uses a toy with wheels or rides on the back of your bicycle. If you ride a bike, wear your helmet, too. Remember, your child learns from watching you.

## **Closely watch your child in and around water**

Children can drown in as little as two inches of water. An adult must always be within an arm's length whenever a toddler is in or around water.

At home, make sure to always stay with your child whenever he is in the bathroom or taking a bath. Keep buckets empty and out of reach. Empty the wading pool when you're not using it, keep garbage cans covered, and put fences around pools and ponds.

Make sure your child wears a life jacket when he is playing in or near the water, on a dock, or in a boat, raft or inner tube. Wear a life jacket yourself. Teach your child to wait for your "OK" before getting into the water.

Most children are not ready for formal swim lessons until about 4 years old. Even if your child has been in an infant or toddler water class, he can still drown.

Learn child CPR. Call your local fire station or American Red Cross chapter about classes.

### **WA State Drowning Prevention Project**

[www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp)

## **For the Health of All Our Children**