

Community immunity

Community immunity means that a disease does not spread easily because enough people in the community are immunized against that disease. All the immunized people help to protect others in the community who need extra protection, like babies and grandparents. If many people decide not to get immunized, this immunity gets weaker and outbreaks of disease can occur. Remember that by getting your child and yourself immunized, you also protect those who:

- have weak immune systems
- are not fully immunized
- cannot get shots because of a medical condition or because they are too young or too old

If your child is not fully immunized or if you have questions about vaccines, talk to your doctor or nurse. You may also visit www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize or call your local health department for more information.

Care for your growing child's teeth

Help your child brush well at least twice a day with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

Your child will get her permanent 6-year molars soon. Talk with the dentist about getting dental sealants on these molars to prevent cavities.

Your child may soon become active in sports. If she does play sports, talk to the dentist about using a mouth guard to prevent teeth from being damaged or knocked out. This is important because all teeth, baby teeth and permanent teeth, are needed for speech and to keep other teeth in place. Guard her teeth, jaw and head from injury by using:

- a car seat or booster seat on every car ride
- a bike helmet for bicycling, skateboarding, skating and when riding a scooter

If a permanent tooth is knocked out, it is important to **get your child to a dentist within two hours**. The tooth can often be reattached. Rinse it very gently if it is dirty. If possible, put the tooth back in place right away and hold it there. If you cannot get it back in, put it in milk or water until you get to the dentist.

Learning about others

As your child gets older and begins to be around more people, he will meet children who are not like him. They may look or sound different, have different abilities or be part of other kinds of families or cultures. Help him understand that every person is unique and special. If you notice your child staring at someone, remember that he is just being curious. Talk to him about what he is seeing and answer any questions he has about the differences that he notices in others. Encourage him to make friends with all kinds of people. Try to set a good example yourself.

Make healthy food choices

Talk with your child about the importance of eating foods that help her grow and be healthy.

- A variety of grains, proteins, dairy products and colorful fruits and vegetables helps everyone get the vitamins and minerals they need.
- Every meal and snack should include at least one serving of a fruit or vegetable. One serving for a child this age is about ¼ - ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. Half of a medium-sized apple or six baby carrots is about a ½ cup. Let her choose a favorite fruit or vegetable for a snack.
- Ask your child to make a list of her favorite foods from each food group. Use this list to help plan meals. Go shopping together and pick out foods from each food group.



- 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 Child Healthy and Safe

Help your child deal with stress

Stress can be caused by many things. Both happy and sad things can cause stress. Starting school, family changes (like a new brother or sister, or a divorce), or world events can all be stressful. Learn when your child is feeling stress by noticing changes in how he behaves.

Your child may:

- Feel sick, or cry and whine more often than usual
- Have temper tantrums or trouble getting along with others
- Not want to do things he usually enjoys

There are things that you can do to help your child cope in **any** stressful situation.

- Talk with your child to find out what he is feeling and thinking.
- Give your child simple, honest answers. Too much information could scare or confuse him.
- Help your child express his feelings by doing things like drawing, playing with dolls or puppets and being physically active.
- Keep your daily routines the same as much as possible. This can help your child feel safe.

Teach problem-solving skills

You are a role model for your child. Children learn how to treat others by watching you. By talking about strong feelings and solving problems respectfully, you set a good example.

It might be hard to listen to your child when she is very angry or upset. When she is mad at **you** it is even more difficult. Listening to your child will help her calm down and talk. If you need to calm down, take a deep breath and count to ten. Try to listen without interrupting. Kneel or bend down to your child's level. Tell her that you want to hear and understand her feelings. Then you can find ways to solve the problem together.

Questions about sex are normal

You may be uncomfortable or worried about how to answer your child's questions about sex. If you need help, ask your doctor, nurse or a trusted friend for help and ideas. You can also find helpful books at your local library.

When your child asks you a question about sex or private body parts, keep your answer short and simple. Use the correct words for body parts and try not to seem embarrassed. Find out why your child is asking the question. This may make it easier to answer.

Gun safety at home

It is important to lock up all guns. It is very hard to keep things hidden from curious children. If you have guns in your home, your child will find them and want to play with them.

Storing guns safely is even more important than teaching your child that guns are dangerous.

- Always remove ammunition from guns.
- Lock up guns and ammunition separately.
- Use a locking device, like a gun safe or lock box.
- Check that the storage device has been approved by going to <http://ag.ca.gov/firearms/fsdcertlist.php>

To learn about safe gun storage, go to
www.lokitup.org or
Safe Storage Hotline, 1-877-LOK-IT-UP (565-4887)

Gun safety away from home

In Washington State, more than 30% of homes with children have a gun. In about 39,000 of those households, guns are left loaded and unlocked. Before your child goes to other children's homes, ask the parents about firearms and how they are stored. Ask about guns just as you would ask about other safety issues like booster seats or swimming pools. Then decide whether or not to let your child play there.

Prepare for an emergency

Teach your child how and when to call 911 in case of emergency.

- ◆ Use a toy telephone and pretend he is making a call. Help your child practice giving his phone number, address, and parents' full names.
- ◆ Make sure he knows that he should stay calm and answer all of the operator's questions. Let him know that help will be on the way even though the operator may continue to ask questions.
- ◆ Teach him not to hang up until the operator tells him to.
- ◆ Make sure your child knows never to call 911 as a joke or just to see what might happen.

To learn more about teaching children to use 911, call your local fire department.



For the Health of All Our Children

CHILD Profile is a service of the Washington State Department of Health