Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Dr. Christopher Burress
Board certified Internal Medicine and Pediatrics

Caring for your 4-year-old child

Name_____ Weight_____ Height_____ Date_____

Keep Your Child Safe

Use a Booster Seat

Use it properly in the back seat facing forward until your child weighs 60 pounds or your child's head is higher than the back of the seat. Then use the seat belt.

Prevent Drowning

- Teach your child how to swim.
- Never leave your child alone while taking a bath.
- Learn child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Prevent Burns

- Protect your child from sunburn. Use sunscreen.
- Keep your child away from hot stoves, hot liquids and hot pots.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120ºF.

Prevent Poisoning

- Lock all poisons (medicines, pest killers, paints, cleaning agents) out of reach and sight of your child.

Prevent Other Injuries

- Teach your child to respect animals and other living things.
- Make sure an adult is always watching your child.
- Make your home child-safe (see our "Child-Proofing Checklist").
- Make your child wear a helmet when using a tricycle, bike, or in-line skates.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- Teach your child about pedestrian and playground safety. Watch all play near streets and driveways.
- Lock or remove the door of any unused refrigerator, freezer, or ice chest.
- Teach your child your child's name, address, and phone number.
- Teach your child not to follow or accept gifts or care rides from strangers.
- **Never** shake, toss or hit your toddler. Make sure other caregivers (like day care providers, aunts and uncles) don't either.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Feed your child at family mealtimes. Give your child 2 nutritious snacks per day, but don't use them as rewards. Nutritious snacks are low in fat and sugar and high in fiber (like most fruits).
- Offer your child nutritious foods and let your child decide what and how much to eat. You choose the menu; do not let your child dictate it. Avoid soft drinks and switch to low-fat milk.
- Eat healthy foods yourself. Show that mealtime is enjoyable and not rushed.

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Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Encourage Healthy Development

- Encourage your child socially. Sing together. Encourage your child to explore and play with other children. Enroll your child in pre-school. Limit television, cell phone exposure, tablet exposure, and videos to one hour per day. Watch programs together and discuss them.
- Excite your child's mind. Read stories and rhymes with your child. Help your child use words to express feelings. Go to a museum and get your child a library card.
- Help your child be stronger and more coordinated. Take your child to a park or play ground regularly. Be physically active yourself! Let your child create things with paper, glue and child's scissors.
- Encourage your child's self-confidence and self-respect. When dressing, eating and playing, offer choices that are okay with you. **Never** yell at your child. Listen to your child and answer your child's questions honestly. Spend individual time with your child doing something you both enjoy.
- Teach about sex and private parts. Answer questions about "where babies come from." Use correct words for genitalia (like "penis" and "labia").

Encourage Healthy Behaviors

- Children need structure. Create a schedule for your child's day and try to keep to it. As a family, create a few rules that apply to everyone. Enforce these rules consistently.
- Help your child learn to calm down or settle.
- Teach your child that violence (like hitting, biting and kicking others, or breaking things) is not okay. Show your 4-year-old how to cooperate. Praise your child for healthy behavior.

Avoid screen time with your child by limiting exposure to Cell Phones, Tablets, or Laptops.

Encourage Self Care

- Your child needs a regular bedtime, and may need a nap each day. Help your child sleep through the night in your child's own bed.
- Help your child brush your child's teeth at least daily. Use toothpaste with fluoride. Take your child to see a dentist.
- Discourage your child from regularly sucking your child's thumb or fingers.
- Teach your child that your child's private parts can only be touched with your child's permission. Tell your child to report unwanted touching right away.

Prevent Sickness—Identify and Treat It Early

- Do not induce vomiting or use ipecac. For suspected poisoning, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Save this number in your cell phone.
- Keep your child away from cigarette smoke. Don't smoke in the car. Don't smoke in the home.
- Call the clinic right away if your child is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for children to treat fever or minor injuries. A dehydrated child is much less active than usual, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Development

All children develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your child:

- Hops on one foot, Balances on one foot for two seconds
- Knows the name of four colors
- Pours liquids and cuts and mashes on food
- Knows your child's first and last name
- Sings a song from memory
- Plays fantasy games, Plays board or cards games
- Tells you what will happen next in a book

Your child's next visit is at about 5 years. Bring your child's immunization (shot) record with you.