

E. HEALTH EDUCATION/ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE

Age-Specific Health Education

The preventive care visit is the opportune time to integrate health education and anticipatory guidance to both the parent and the child throughout the visit. Health education and anticipatory guidance should include information that will:

- Assist the family in understanding what to expect in terms of the child's development
- Provide information about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and practices
- Promote the prevention of diseases and injuries
- Age-specific information is included on each of the Healthy Kids visit sheets

Age specific Anticipatory Guidance topics are listed below. Address at least three general age specific topics below.

Infant to Preschool

Developmental tasks	Behavior/Discipline
Parenting	Sleep
Injury Prevention	Child Care
Nutrition	Toilet training
Dental Care	Self-comforting behaviors
Family planning (mother)	School Readiness

School-Age Child

Increase the involvement of child in discussion and decision-making.

Developmental tasks	School Progress
Parenting	Dental Care
Behavior/Discipline	Health habits/Self care
Sex Education (counsel parents)	Social Interactions
Injury Prevention	Nutrition

Adolescence

Focus on the adolescent's increasing responsibility in decision-making.

Developmental tasks	Sexual activity
Health habits/Self care	Contraception
Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs	STIs and AIDS prevention
Nutrition	Injury Prevention
Dental Care	Suicide Prevention
School Progress	Violence
Social Responsibilities	Social Interactions
Respect self/others	Peer Pressure/Bullying
Safe driving/riding in car	Future Career Plans/Ideas

In addition, document health education in the medical record to address the following:

- Health problems identified by the provider, parent or child that includes needed treatments, counseling and/or referrals for additional specialty services
- Education about the scheduling of the next Healthy Kids visit following the Schedule of Preventive Health Care
- Education to seek annual dental care

Injury Prevention

According to the *Safe Kids USA*, unintentional injury is the number one killer of America's children¹. By taking simple precautions, it is estimated that almost 90 percent of these unintentional injuries can be avoided. Discuss injury prevention as part of anticipatory guidance and document topics covered. Possible topics are noted below.

Bicycle Safety

A bicycle helmet should be appropriate for the size and age of the child and meet the safety standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the Snell Memorial Foundation, or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Have parents periodically review bicycle safety rules and traffic laws with their child. Laws that apply to motor vehicle operators also apply to cyclists. Maryland law requires helmets be worn through 16 years of age. Encourage parents to act as role models and purchase helmets to wear when they ride.

¹ See <http://www.safekids.org/why-it-matters>.

For more information, use the *Safe Kids Bike Safety Tips* handout on the Safe Kids USA website at <http://www.safekids.org> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

Car Passenger Safety

The use of child restraint systems including infant seats, convertible seats, forward facing child safety seats, booster seats, and seat belts are effective in reducing injury.

Maryland's current law requires that children under eight years old ride in an appropriate child restraint, unless the child is 4'9" or taller.² Every child from 8 to 16 years old who is not secured in a child restraint must be secured in the vehicle's seat belt, in every seating position in the vehicle. The law also prohibits passengers younger than 16 years of age from riding in the unenclosed bed of a pick-up truck.³

Child safety advocates recommend that children under 13 years of age ride secured in the back seat of a car⁴. More car seats guidelines for children can be found on the *Parents Central* website by following the link: <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/RightSeat.htm> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

Families who are unable to purchase a child restraint can contact the *Maryland Kids in Safety Seat (KISS) Program* at **1-800-370-7328** or e-mail dhmh.kiss@maryland.gov for a referral to a local car seat loaner program. For more information, visit the KISS Program web page at <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/ohpetup/kiss/Pages/Home.aspx> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

Fire Prevention

Ask parents if there are working smoke alarms in the family home. Since the primary job of a smoke alarm is to awaken sleeping family members, the alarms should be located as close to each bedroom as possible. Because smoke rises, smoke alarms should be located on the ceiling or on the wall between 6 and 12 inches below the ceiling.

Families should also have a fire escape plan. Have primary and alternate routes marked and everyone practice them to escape the home. Choose a location outside the home as the meeting place. Contact the office of *Maryland State Fire Marshal* by phone at **410-653-8980/1-800-525-3124**. For more information, use the *Safe Kids Fire Prevention*

² Child restraint includes car seats, booster seats and other federally approved safety devices.

³ COMAR §22-412.2.

⁴ See <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/RightSeat.htm>.

handout on the Safe Kids USA website at <http://www.safekids.org> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

Gun Safety

All children are potentially at risk of unintentional firearm injury, whether a gun is present in the home or not. To help protect children in the state, Maryland enacted The Child Access Protection Law. This law states: “No person shall store or keep any loaded firearm on any premise under their control if it is known, or reasonably should be known, that a minor, age 15 and under, is likely to gain access to the firearm without permission, unless the firearm is properly stored.” Maryland also mandates that, beginning January 1, 2003, all handguns sold in the state and manufactured after December 2002 have an integrated mechanical safety-locking device.

Even with these laws in place in Maryland, not everyone is aware of these requirements or, if there are no children in the home, may think the laws do not apply to them. Parents and caregivers need to act to protect their children.

Gun owners should:

- Store them unloaded, locked up and out of children’s reach
- Store ammunition in a separate, locked location
- Use quality gun locks, lock boxes or gun safes for every firearm
- Keep gun storage keys and lock combinations hidden in a separate location
- Take a course in using, maintaining and storing guns safely

All parents and caregivers should:

- Talk to their children about the potential dangers of guns
- Teach children never to touch or play with a gun
- Teach children to tell an adult if they find a gun or call 911 if no adult is present
- Ask neighbors, friends, relatives and adults in any homes where their children visit, if firearms are present in the home and how they are stored
- Not allow their children to visit the home if the firearms are not properly stored

For more information, use the *Gun Safety Tips* handout on the Safe Kids USA website at <http://www.safekids.org> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

Poison Safety

Many common household products can poison children; including cleaning supplies, cosmetics, art supplies, alcohol, medicines and vitamins. Parents and caregivers can

protect their families by using the *Safe Kids Poison Prevention Tips* handout on the Safe Kids USA website at <http://www.safekids.org> to identify and eliminate potential hazards and prepare the home for children (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV). In addition, parents and caregivers should:

- Never leave potentially poisonous household products unattended when in use
- Read labels and follow the exact directions – giving medications based on the child’s weight and only with the dispenser packaged with that medication
- Know which plants in and around the home are poisonous; remove them or make them inaccessible to children
- Cover lead paint with a sealant or hire a professional to remove it in homes built before 1978
- Wash children’s hands and faces, toys and pacifiers frequently to reduce the risk of ingesting lead-contaminated dust

Advise parents to post the national toll-free poison hotline number at every telephone: **1-800-222-1222**. This same number can be used anywhere in the United States to be connected to the closest poison center. For more information about educational resources and materials from the *Maryland Poison Center*, call **410-706-7604** or visit their website at <http://www.mdpoison.com/>. For educational resources and materials in Prince George’s and Montgomery counties, contact the *National Capital Poison Center* at **202-362-3867** or visit their website at <http://www.poison.org/>.

Sun Safety

Exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays appears to be the most important factor in the development of skin cancer, which is largely preventable with consistent sun protection. Parents and caregivers, to protect children from the sun, should assure that they:

- Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Play in the shade whenever possible – caution: reflective surfaces (such as water) can cause sunburns even in the shade
- Wear protective, tightly woven clothing
- Wear a hat with a 4” brim all around
- Avoid reflective surfaces – they can reflect up to 85% of the sun’s rays
- Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays – reapplied every 2 hours

For more information about ways to protect children from over exposure to the sun, contact the *Center for a Healthy Maryland* at MedChi, **410-539-0872, ext. 3340**, or visit their website at www.healthymaryland.org and click on skin cancer prevention.

Water Safety

Children can drown or nearly drown in seconds and should never be left alone near water, at the pool, beach, or home. Drowning and near drowning typically occurs when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse of supervision. Inside the home, water dangers include bathtubs, sinks, toilets, and buckets. While outside the home, water dangers include natural bodies of water, pools, water features, hot tubs, and wading pools.

Parents also need to be aware of the temperature of the water in the home. The National Safe Kids Campaign reports that it takes just 3 seconds for children to sustain 3rd degree burns from a water temperature of 140°F. The home hot water heater temperature should be set at 120°F. For more information about water safety, refer to the [*Water Safety at Home*](#) and the [*Swimming Safety Tips*](#) handouts on the Safe Kids USA website at <http://www.safekids.org> (Refer to Section 7, Appendix IV).

