



## 11 Ways to Raise a Healthy Child

**World Breastfeeding Week is August 1st through 7th, 2006**



As a parent, you are an important teacher of health care and health information for your child. Here are 11 recommendations to help you succeed at this important job.

### 1. Choose breast over bottle.

Breast-feed and you will give your baby a health advantage from day one. Breast milk provides all the nutrients a newborn needs. It also has important antibodies that help babies fight infections. And research shows that breast-fed babies have fewer ear infections and allergies and less diarrhea.

#### Save the date!

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, for more information please visit: [ndbh.partnersforimmunization.org](http://ndbh.partnersforimmunization.org)

### 2. Be wise: Immunize.

Immunizations protect your child from serious diseases, such as measles, whooping cough and hepatitis.

Children should receive most of their shots before age 2. But older children and teenagers also need certain shots. Talk with your child's doctor to find out which immunizations your child needs and when.

You may worry that your child will have a reaction to an immunization. But when reactions do occur, they are usually mild. The benefits of immunizing your child far outweigh any potential risks.

### 3. Take children to checkups.

Your baby needs regular checkups before age 2. After 2, your child's doctor will recommend a checkup schedule that is appropriate for your child. At these checkups, the doctor tracks your child's growth and development. Checkups allow doctors to spot potential problems early, when they are easiest to treat. Checkups are also a good time to ask questions about how to keep your child healthy.

### 4. Buckle 'em up.

Beginning with your child's first ride home from the hospital, always use a car seat. Car accidents kill and injure more children in the United States than any other type of injury. Protect your children by placing them in a car seat that is appropriate for their weight and height. Be sure to read the directions, so that you understand how to properly use the car seat. Most crashes are head-on, so always put kids in the backseat.

Children should use a car seat for as long as possible. Once they have outgrown car seats, they should sit in a booster seat until they are big enough to use a seat belt. For proper fit, the shoulder belt should fit across your child's shoulders, and the lap belt should lie flat and low across the hips.

## Continued... Healthy Child

### **5. Start dental care early.**

Healthy teeth can last a lifetime. So teach kids good dental care at an early age. Even before the first tooth appears, wipe baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding.

Once the first tooth appears, begin brushing. Start flossing your child's teeth as soon as any two teeth touch. Once children begin brushing their own teeth, supervise them to make sure they are doing a good job.

Since letting food sit on the teeth promotes tooth decay, teach children to brush after meals. Bottles filled with milk or juice can also cause decay. So don't put children to bed with a bottle or let them walk around unattended with a bottle. If possible, wean kids from the bottle by age 1.

The American Dental Association recommends that you take your child to a dentist within six months of getting the first tooth and no later than 1 year old. Your child's dentist can tell you how often your child should get regular checkups thereafter.

### **6. Put safety first.**

It only takes a second for an accident to happen, but the harm done can last much longer. So do all you can to prevent accidents in the first place. Here are a few basic safety rules:

Keep medicines and household chemical products where children cannot get to them.

Don't leave kids unsupervised, especially when they are outside, near the street, or near or in water.

Make sure your children wear helmets when bicycling.

If you have guns in the house, make sure that they are kept unloaded and locked up, and that the ammunition is kept in a separate place and locked up, as well.

### **7. Let kids live smoke-free.**

If you smoke, quitting smoking is one of the greatest gifts you can give your children (and yourself). Kids who live with a smoker cough and wheeze more and recover more slowly from colds. Secondhand smoke increases a child's risk for ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, upper respiratory infections, and asthma. In addition, infants regularly exposed to smoke are at higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome. For your child's health, and your own, kick the smoking habit.

### **8. Hand out healthy food.**

Good nutrition is especially important for growing bodies. Children under 2 have special nutrition needs, and for them low-fat eating is not healthy. By age 5, however, a child's diet should be similar to a healthy adult's, with lots of fruits, vegetables, grains, and low in fat, sugar, and meat.

## Continued... Healthy Child

Make it easy for your children to eat healthfully by offering a wide variety of nutritious food choices. Also, let them help choose what foods to buy.

To promote healthy eating habits, it's important not to force a child to eat or make certain foods off-limits. Doing so may lead to poor eating patterns. A healthy diet can include any food in moderation.

### **9. Court a love of exercise.**

Active kids are healthy kids. Children should be physically active every day. Regular exercise boosts cardiovascular fitness and overall health. Help your kids be their healthiest by joining them in physical play. Tag, swimming, bicycling, and walking can all be enjoyed as a family.

### **10. Keep children's skin youthful.**

As great as outside play is for kids, there is a downside -- sun exposure. Skin cancer later in life is directly related to sun exposure in childhood and adolescence. Kids over 6 months should wear sunscreen every day of the year, and even in the water. Sunscreen should have a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. For sensitive areas, such as the nose and ears, use zinc oxide. It is a total block.

Have kids wear clothing made of tightly woven fabrics and hats that shade their face, neck, and ears. To avoid the sun's strongest hours, schedule outdoor play-time before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. whenever possible. Also, have kids play in the shade, where the sun is not as strong.

### **11. Be a role model.**

Children learn many of their most valuable lessons from you. In other words, choose a healthy, active lifestyle for yourself -- and include your children in it. Teaching by example makes a lasting impression on your children -- and creates healthy family traditions in the process.

#### **For more information:**

[https://ndbh.personaladvantage.com/child\\_care](https://ndbh.personaladvantage.com/child_care)

<http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/>

## Why We Remove Cataracts

### August is Cataract Awareness Month



Perhaps the first thing you'll notice is a glare from oncoming headlights at night. Usually, a haze surrounds the lights. Then, you're likely to find reading more challenging. It's harder to see the letters, and they tend to blur together. This is what happens when you develop cataracts.

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens, a clear, soft structure behind the pupil that works much like a camera lens. The top cause of cataracts is aging. In fact, more people over 70 have cataracts than not. Other causes include:

- Genetics
- Sunlight
- Metabolic diseases such as diabetes
- Some medications, including lengthy use of steroids

When cataracts affect your ability to function, it's time to consider surgery.

Many people think surgeons take the cataract off the eye. Actually, they remove the entire lens and implant a synthetic lens. This new lens includes a prescription, much like eyeglasses. Still, you'll probably need prescription glasses, especially for reading.

In most cases, patients receive a sedative before surgery but remain awake throughout the procedure. Some surgeons give numbing injections around the eye, but anesthetic drops can be used instead.

Once the anesthetic is working, the surgeon makes an incision in the eye to help reach the cataract and implant the new lens. Usually, ultrasound energy is used to liquefy the cataract-clouded lens. That the remains of the lens are removed through a tube in a suction-like process called aspiration. The painless procedure takes about 15 to 30 minutes per eye. Complex cases are unusual, but require more care.

If both eyes have cataracts, they are usually operated on at different times, usually weeks apart. This is done for your safety.

The first eye should heal without complications before surgery is performed on the other eye. Patients go home the same day and wear a patch or shield to protect the eye. Usually, the eye is examined the next day, a week after the surgery, and a month later.

#### For more information:

<https://ndbh.personaladvantage.com/content?sub=10000189>

<http://www.aao.org/patients/eyemd/ataract.cfm>



## Travel Smart Planning Ahead for Travel Emergencies

Whether you're headed for the beach, the outback, or the big city for your summer vacation, you should add a few more items to your to-do list. Taking time before your departure to plan ahead for possible medical emergencies and everyday health and medication needs is just as important as making plane and hotel reservations. The following suggestions can help ensure you and your family have a healthy and happy vacation:

### Road tips

- Pack smart. Pack an adequate supply of medicines and be sure to store them properly. Heat and humidity, for example, can affect many medications, so avoid keeping them in a beach bag, car trunk, or glove compartment.
- Keep medications in your carry-on bags, not in checked luggage, if you're flying to your destination.
- At all times, carry your health-insurance card, doctor's phone numbers, and a list of medications you take.
- Keep medicines in their original containers. Doing so will ensure you have all the information you might need -- medicine name, dosage, warnings, interactions -- with you. If you take more than one medication and use a pill dispenser, wait until you reach your destination to fill the dispenser.
- Check labels for warnings about how medications may increase your body's sensitivity to the sun, heat, or cold. If you are pregnant or have a chronic health condition, check with your doctor about the potential effect of conditions you may encounter while traveling.
- Wear an identification bracelet with detailed medical information if you have a chronic or life-threatening condition.
- Ask your doctor for advice about how to manage respiratory or food allergies while traveling.
- Pack a small first-aid kit that includes bandages, antiseptic and antibiotic ointments, anti-itch cream, anti-histamines, upset-stomach remedies, antidiarrhea medicine, tweezers, and pain relievers.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice about when to take your regular scheduled medications if you'll cross more than one time zone.
- If traveling with children, make sure all medication containers have child-resistant caps.

### Overseas agenda

Also follow these suggestions if you're traveling outside the United States:

- Keep all medications in their original packaging or labeled bottles; otherwise, they could be confiscated at Customs.
- Pack any nonprescription medications you normally take -- it can be difficult to find American formulations in many countries.
- Take care when buying medications overseas. Ask the pharmacist for help, especially if the label is in another language. Carefully examine the packaging for signs of tampering.
- Be sure you have the right immunizations. To double-check, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Travelers' Web site at [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/). Be aware that some vaccinations require multiple doses and must be started weeks before your departure.
- Check with your health-insurance company to determine your coverage abroad. If you're not covered adequately, you may be able to buy more through your insurer or a major credit-card company.

## Making the Most of Your Move

**Don't let stress get the best of you!**



Everyone's heard the horror stories of movers charging exorbitant rates, showing up two weeks late, breaking sentimental heirlooms, and losing boxes. Exaggerations aside, it's stressful. It's exhausting. And it's expensive.

Moving is big business. Millions of families hire professional movers each year, paying them about \$7 billion annually, says the American Movers Conference, a national trade organization. But the industry standards vary greatly and no two companies are alike, knowing the right questions to ask up front and what to do if disaster strikes will keep disputes out of court and money in your pocket.

### **Before the Move**

Get at least three estimates from different movers who review your items in person. Don't assume that the larger the company, the better. Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of Consumer Reports, says reputable, national companies don't necessarily provide the lowest rates or have the least problems.

Ask each company for both a "binding" and "non-binding" estimate.

A binding estimate is an agreement that sets a fixed price up front before weighing the items. Usually a truck is weighed before and after loading the items. The price depends on the difference in pounds. The binding estimate cannot be changed if everything weighs more than the movers thought, but if it weighs less, you'll get a refund.

Not every moving company offers this option and some that do charge extra for it.

A non-binding estimate is what all movers offer - a rough idea of what it will cost but no guarantee. Movers can't charge for giving a non-binding estimate.

The downside is that the final price is often more - usually hundreds or thousands more - than the initial estimate.

Make sure the estimator includes the costs of putting together an inventory. An inventory lists everything that's being moved and its condition. It will help settle any disputes about damaged goods. Review the inventory list with the mover, so that every scratch and nick is recorded accurately. Get a copy of the inventory.

And finally, ask the company for its annual performance report. By law, the company must supply you with a copy if you ask. It tracks the number of claims for damaged goods, late deliveries and price discrepancies.

Ask as many questions as possible and feel free to go above your representative if something sounds fishy.

## The Contract

Once you decide on a company, you'll have to sign a moving contract called a "bill of lading." Each varies depending on the company, but the Consumers Union says every contract should include the following:

- Name, address, and phone number of the moving company.
- The addresses of your old and new residences.
- The agreed date and time of the pickup and delivery. Try to put a specific time on the contract, but also remember that unexpected delays do happen.
- The payment plan. What's the maximum amount of money that must be paid upon delivery? If it's a binding estimate, make sure to get the price written down and signed off on, and attach a copy to the contract if it's not already included. If it's a non-binding estimate, the company usually requires the initial estimate to be paid on delivery and then gives the customer 30 days to pay any extra costs. However, some movers demand the additional costs on the spot or threaten to keep your stuff until you pay.
- The insurance plan. Write down how much insurance you bought and at what premium.

Ask how payment should be made. Many moving companies don't accept credit cards or personal checks, wanting cash, certified check or, a money order. If you can't pay on delivery day, the movers won't hang around until you go to the bank. Many times, they'll put your possessions in storage and add it to your bill.

## Moving Day

What do you do if disaster strikes? It's going to depend on your contract, the company and the amount of moving insurance you bought.

Some moving companies require customers to go through a lengthy and complex appeals process to fight extra charges or get reimbursed for damaged goods. Making it complicated is a good way to get people to just forget it and pay up. But don't give up that fast.

You usually have up to 180 days to file a claim. The company then has 30 days after that to acknowledge your claim and then another 120 days to come up with a settlement.

If you moved across state lines (called an interstate move), then you have more options. The American Movers Conference offers a dispute settlement program to keep problems involving damaged goods out of court. The American Arbitration Association mediates the disputes as an independent, unbiased third party.

"A lot of the items that cause problems have sentimental and emotional value," says David Hauenstein, director of the dispute settlement program. "For example, someone's family piano ends up damaged and wants the movers to pay \$10,000. The company comes back and says 'yes, we damaged the piano but it wasn't in great condition to begin with and it's not worth \$10,000. We'll give you \$1,000.'"

Moving companies are required by law to provide information about arbitration services, where an independent arbitrator decides the case instead of a judge. Although both sides must voluntarily agree to arbitrate, most companies almost always opt for arbitration rather than a potential lawsuit. The arbitrator has 60 days to make a judgment.

Another option is small claims court, depending on how much reimbursement you seek.

If you moved within the state, federal laws don't apply. But that doesn't mean you're out of luck. Contact your state attorney general's office or local Better Business Bureau.

Moving is never going to be a piece of cake, but, like everything else, the more prepared you are, the better.