

Screenings, Shots and Sports Physicals for School Year Success

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WHILE MOST KIDS ARE EXCITED TO BE OUT OF SCHOOL AND ENJOYING THEIR MUCH ANTICIPATED SUMMER VACATION, SOME PARENTS ARE WISELY PLANNING AHEAD FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR. KINDERGARTEN SCREENINGS AND SPORTS PHYSICALS ARE NOW IN FULL SWING.

When planning a time for your child's physical examination, earlier is better. Usually, there are more appointment times available to choose from if you schedule early. More important, the entire summer is available to treat and care for any health or developmental problems that may surface during the exam so your child can be at their best when school starts. Wellness checks for all ages are recommended yearly.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Many times we have been asked to explain the purpose of the exams, what is involved, and what is required by each state. Usually the first thing that comes to mind when a child receives a physical is making sure immunizations are up to date, or as the kids might say: "getting shots!" Immunization requirements can easily be found in many places including the doctor's office, state health department, school district office and the Internet.

SOUTH DAKOTA REQUIRES KINDERGARTNERS TO SHOW PROOF OF IMMUNIZATIONS INCLUDING:

- DTaP, (Diphtheria, Tetanus (lockjaw) and Pertussis or whooping cough)
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (German Measles)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Polio series

SOUTH DAKOTA REQUIRES MIDDLE SCHOOLERS TO SHOW PROOF OF IMMUNIZATIONS INCLUDING:

- A booster for Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap)
- 1-dose of Meningococcal for meningitis

VACCINATIONS THAT ARE RECOMMENDED IN SOUTH DAKOTA BUT NOT REQUIRED:

- Haemophilus B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Pneumococcus (Pevnar)

Nebraska has the same requirements for entry to kindergarten as South Dakota but also requires the Hepatitis B series. The tetanus vaccine needs to be updated every 10 years unless an injury occurs, then it should be updated in 5 years. The vaccine against human papillomavirus (Gardasil) is recommended by the CDC for both boys and girls ages 9-18. All of these vaccinations will be discussed at your child's well check to decide what is best for you and your child.



PHYSICAL EVALUATION

Of equal importance to the immunizations is the physical evaluation, which includes a thorough family and personal history. This portion of the evaluation can detect life-threatening risk factors and is the part most frequently overlooked, especially when sports physicals happen in a larger group setting.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Another important aspect of the physical, in addition to the family health history, is the developmental screening. This includes fine motor, gross motor, language skills and social interactions that are all necessary for success in school. If any problems exist, earlier detection can mean earlier intervention to better prepare your child for classroom success. These milestones are evaluated at the kindergarten physical and at yearly well checks. Much of the developmental evaluation is performed by trained nurses and confirmed by your physician.

ADDITIONAL SCREENINGS PERFORMED AT ALL PHYSICALS INCLUDE :

- Vision
- Vital signs (blood pressure heart rate)
- Height
- Weight

All of this information is used to determine if your child falls within the “normal” parameters. If not, that may signify a problem that requires follow-up. A complete health history will be done at all well checks and is vitally important for the student athlete. A health history may suggest underlying neurologic, respiratory or especially cardiac problems that can result in sudden death of an athlete. Problems such as arrhythmias, coronary artery abnormalities and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (enlargement of the heart restricting blood flow during activity) do not present with easily identifiable physical findings. However, studies have shown that a history of passing out with exercise or other alterations in consciousness is highly predictive for the above problems.

The importance of the personal and family health history cannot be overstated; it may be the only sign of a future problem for your child.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

A full history and physical exam with a trusted physician will also offer an opportunity for your teen to voice any of his/her questions or concerns. This process is an important step for your teen to start an active involvement in his or her medical care and a helpful step towards adulthood.

A yearly well check is essential to your child’s health and wellbeing. These visits are important tools for your physician to know your child better and to detect problems before they arise. The AAP recommends a well check every year for all children up to 18 years of age.

For more information, or to set up an appointment, please call:

Yankton Medical Clinic
605-665-7841

— or —

Vermillion Medical Clinic
605-624-8643