

Health Screening For Children

Health screening benefits the overall health of the child. It is through checkups and tests that physicians can identify potential health problems. Many childhood health problems can be corrected before they become a health problem that the child carries into adulthood. Through health screening, healthy eating and regular physical activity you can help your child learn healthy living habits which can last a lifetime.

Blood Pressure

Your child should have blood pressure measurements regularly, starting at around 3 years of age. High blood pressure in children needs medical attention. It may be a sign of underlying disease. If not treated it may lead to serious illness. Check with your child's physician care about blood pressure measurements.

Lead

Lead can harm your child, slowing physical and mental growth and damaging many parts of the body. The most common way children get lead poisoning is by being around old house paint that is chipping or peeling. Some authorities recommend lead tests at 1 and 2 years of age. If you can answer "yes" to any of the questions below, your child may need lead tests earlier and more often than other children. Has your child:

- Lived in or regularly visited a house built before 1950? (This could include a day care center, preschool, the home of a babysitter or relative, etc.)
- Lived in or regularly visited a house built before 1978 (the year lead-based paint was banned for residential use) with recent, ongoing, or planned renovation or remodeling?
- Had a brother or sister, housemate, or playmate followed or treated for lead poisoning?

Vision and Hearing

Your child's vision should be tested before starting school, at about 3 or 4 years of age. Your child may need vision tests as he or she grows. Some authorities recommend hearing testing beginning at 3 to 4 years of age. If at any age your child has any of the vision or hearing warning signs listed below, be sure to talk with your health care provider.

Vision Warning Signs

- Eyes turning inward (crossing) or outward
- Squinting
- Headaches
- Not doing as well in school work as before
- Blurred or double vision

Hearing Warning Signs

- Poor response to noise or voice
- Slow language and speech development
- Abnormal sounding speech

Special Warning: Listening to very loud music, especially with earphones, can permanently damage your child's hearing.

Additional Tests

Your child may need other tests to prevent health problems. Some common tests are:

- Anemia (Blood) Test- Anemia is having less than the normal number of red blood cells or less hemoglobin than normal in the blood. Your child may need to be tested for anemia when he or she is still a baby (usually around the first birthday). Children may need this test as they get older.
- Cholesterol (Blood) Test- Children (2 years and older) may need this test especially if they have a parent with high cholesterol or a parent or grandparent with heart disease before age 55. If a family history is not available, testing may be needed if your child is obese or has high blood pressure.
- Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test- Children may need this test if they have had close contact with a person who has TB, live in an area where TB is more common than average (such as a Native American reservation, a homeless shelter or an institution) or have recently moved from Asia, Africa, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, or the Pacific Islands.

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