



The Children's Hospital



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY, HAPPY KIDS

# A Parent's GUIDE to Childhood Injuries

Your son fell while riding his bike, and he is complaining that his ankle hurts. Should you try to treat him at home or head for your physician's office? K. Brooke Pengel, MD, FAAP, Medical Director of the Sports Medicine Program for Young Athletes at The Children's Hospital, offers some advice on when it's okay to stay home and what injuries merit a trip to Children's.

**“We** know kids have a great deal of energy just by watching them play,” Dr. Pengel said. “Human nature makes children want to explore and push their boundaries — that’s part of being a kid.”

The type of injury your child is likely to experience will vary depending on his or her age. Small injuries like cuts, scrapes, bumps, bruises and minor burns that may occur around the home typically can be treated using a basic first-aid kit, but other injuries may require attention from a pediatric physician.

#### WHEN TO SEE A PHYSICIAN

Even with the most diligent attention and safety prevention efforts by parents,

injuries will still happen. The Children's Hospital is here for you and your child for treatment of all types of injuries, including:

- **Sprains.** Children who participate in sports like soccer or gymnastics, which often involve twisting and jumping techniques, may be more prone to experiencing sprained ankles or wrists. While many people believe that limiting activity until the affected joint feels better is enough to heal the injury, without proper treatment, sprains can take months or years to heal and may tend to recur. For pain relief, use rest, ice, compression with an Ace® bandage and elevation (RICE) until you can see your own family doctor or a physician at Children's.

**PARENTS!**  
Got a question  
about your child's  
health? We can help!  
See page 7.



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# Eat Your Vitamins

Children need vitamins for promotion of good vision, strong teeth and growing bones, in addition to fighting infection and disease.

Although it is important for children to receive a healthy balance of all vitamins, parents should be especially mindful to ensure their kids receive plenty of the following:

VITAMINS:	BENEFITS:	SOURCES:
Vitamin A	Healthy eyes, skin and immune responses	Carrots, sweet potatoes, milk, cheese, eggs
Vitamins B2, B3, B6 and B12	Increased energy and metabolism	Meat, fish, nuts, eggs, soybeans
Vitamin C	Healthy muscles and skin and promotes healing	Citrus fruits, green vegetables
Calcium and Vitamin D	Strong teeth and bones	Milk, cheese, yogurt
Iron	Healthy muscles and red blood cells	Lean red meats, turkey, beans, spinach

Sources: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) and [www.vitamins-nutrition.org](http://www.vitamins-nutrition.org).

To ensure your child gets the nutrients he or she needs, talk with your family physician or pediatrician, or visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and search "vitamins."

- Fractures.** While minor broken bones like toes or fingers may not require a cast or brace, your child should still visit a physician to ensure proper treatment. However, children who appear to have a broken arm or leg should receive immediate medical attention from their doctor or a pediatric emergency medicine specialist at Children's.
- Dislocations.** Hard falls, collisions with other people or objects, and pulling motions are responsible for the majority of joint dislocations, which may occur in the fingers or shoulders. Joint dislocations typically require a trip to the emergency department at

Children's so a physician can restore proper joint position as soon as possible. If dislocation recurs, a sports medicine specialist may recommend further treatment, which may include minimally invasive surgery to repair the joint.

"Parents also should immediately bring their child to the emergency department at the Children's main location or any emergency or urgent Network of Care

location any time a significant head injury occurs, especially if the child has a severe headache, is vomiting, has trouble seeing or appears to be confused," Dr. Pengel said. "Waiting to see a physician in these instances could be dangerous to the child."

For more information about common childhood injuries and how to care for them, visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and select "Wellness and Safety."



As parents, we can reduce the chance of injuries by childproofing our homes and keeping a careful eye on our children, especially when they are around water. Make sure children wear protective gear when riding a bicycle or participating in a sport, and teach them basic safety rules."

— K. Brooke Pengel, MD, FAAP, Medical Director of the Sports Medicine Program for Young Athletes at The Children's Hospital



# Infection Protection

Germes are everywhere – in your home, on your child’s toys and on shopping carts. Learn what you can do to keep your child healthy and reduce his or her risk of getting an infection.



While making sure children receive regular immunizations and influenza (flu) shots if they are over six months of age can help prevent serious illness, many minor infections are spread among children when they touch a contaminated object and then touch their eyes, noses or mouths. For example, when a child who has a cold rubs his nose and then opens a door, he transfers his germs to the doorknob. Anyone who opens the door afterward contacts those germs. Also, toddlers often put objects in their mouths, which can make them sick if an object contains any unusual germs.

## COUGHS AND COLDS

If your child has a cold or cough, teach her not to cough or sneeze on other people. Instead, she can cover her mouth with a tissue or sneeze into her shirt sleeve at the elbow. To prevent illness, encourage your child to avoid touching her eyes, nose or mouth to prevent colds and eye infections, and teach the basics of proper handwashing.

## DIARRHEA AND VOMITING

To help children avoid bacteria and viruses that cause diarrhea and vomiting, use disinfectants when cleaning diaper-changing areas and bathrooms. Also, be sure to cook all poultry thoroughly and carefully wash your hands and any object that comes in contact with the raw meat, such as a knife or cutting board. Also, avoid placing the cooked meat on the same platter on which the uncooked meat was prepared.

You can also help kids avoid illness by teaching them the following guidelines:

- Always wash their hands after contact with bodily fluids, especially after using the restroom.
- Avoid touching reptiles such as snakes or turtles, and don't keep these animals as pets. They often carry *Salmonella*, a cause of diarrhea.

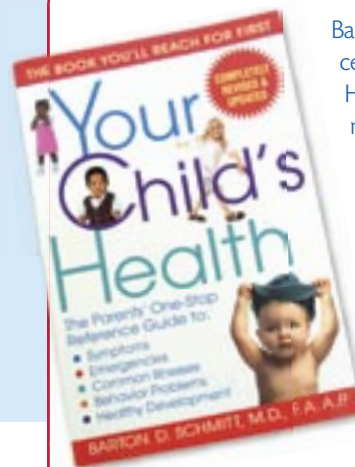
- Pets are meant for petting, so refrain from kissing pets, especially puppies, which can transmit worms and bacteria that cause diarrhea.

## SKIN INFECTIONS

*Staphylococcus* (staph) skin infections or boils can develop when bacteria enter a cut or scrape. Handwashing is key to preventing the spread of staph infections, so make sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently with an antibacterial soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Also, be sure to:

- Have everyone shower daily.
- Keep fingernails cut short.
- Discourage nose picking; approximately 30 percent of people have staph bacteria present in their noses.
- Avoid sharing towels, washcloths, athletic clothing and especially razors.
- Cover cuts or scrapes with antibiotic ointment and a bandage for a few days.

Written by Barton D. Schmitt, MD. Revised February 2009.



Barton Schmitt, MD, FAAP, is a board-certified pediatrician at The Children’s Hospital. He has been practicing medicine for 40 years and has received two distinguished awards from the American Academy of Pediatrics, including the Child Development Award in 1994, followed by the Education Award in 2004. A father of four and grandfather of eight, he most recently completed the third edition of *Your Child’s Health*, now available in bookstores.



# Tummy Troubles

## FAST FACT

Rotavirus is an extremely common childhood illness. In fact, most children have had rotavirus at least once by age two. Although common, it can still be a very serious condition. Approximately 55,000 children in the United States are hospitalized each year because of rotavirus, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Every mom has consoled her preschooler or toddler during a bout with a stomach bug, and one of the most likely culprits for this condition is rotavirus – a highly contagious virus that is known for spreading quickly among young children, especially during the winter months.

Often spread through daycare centers, rotavirus is a common cause of childhood nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps. By following a few simple steps, however, parents can help keep their homes and children rotavirus-free.

Two immunizations are currently available to prevent rotavirus — Rotarix® and RotaTeq®.

“Both of these vaccines have been through extensive testing and are equally effective in protecting children,” said Harley A. Rotbart, MD, pediatrician at The Children’s Hospital and Professor and Vice Chairman of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. “Children who are vaccinated have a significantly reduced chance of catching rotavirus. If they do get the virus, it will likely be a very mild strain.”

## WORK AT HOME

Another step parents can take to help keep rotavirus out of their homes is to pay careful attention to hygiene and sanitation.

Dr. Rotbart, who is also the author of *Germ Proof Your Kids: The Complete Guide to Protecting (without Overprotecting) Your Family from Infections*, recommends regular handwashing, cleaning bathrooms and bedrooms with a bleach-containing disinfectant and careful preparation and handling of food.

“Parents can be very strict about sanitation at home but often struggle with the germs and bugs their kids may bring home from school,” Dr. Rotbart said. “I recommend

bringing alcohol-based sanitizer to school when you pick up your child and having him or her use it before getting into the car to avoid bringing germs home. When you’re selecting a daycare center, talk with the staff about their hygiene protocol.”

## WHEN TO WORRY

One of the most important steps for parents is to recognize and respond to rotavirus.

“Rotavirus can present different symptoms in different children,” Dr. Rotbart said. “Vomiting and diarrhea are typical, but fever and abdominal cramps also are normal symptoms.”

When a child has rotavirus, it’s important for parents to keep him or her as hydrated as possible. Taking a few sips of mineral-infused liquid such as Pedialyte® beginning at the onset of diarrhea is ideal, but ask a physician or your child’s pediatrician about how much your child needs since the proper amount varies by age and weight.

“If a baby or toddler gets dehydrated — which may be indicated by fewer wet diapers, dry crying or a dry mouth — it’s important to immediately seek your pediatrician’s help,” Dr. Rotbart said. “Early recognition and prevention or treatment of dehydration are key to a quick recovery from rotavirus.”

For more information about rotavirus, visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and search for “rotavirus.”



# Don't Let Asthma Sideline Your Child

You may think that because your son has asthma, he can't join the football team. However, this belief could not be further from the truth. With help from The Children's Hospital, children still can participate in sports and get the exercise they need.

About 9 million American children have asthma. Though the condition often requires lifestyle modifications, children with asthma don't have to sit on the sidelines.

"One of the most prevalent misconceptions is that children with asthma can't exercise at all," said Gwen Kerby, MD, Director of the Asthma Management Program at The Children's Hospital and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. "Limiting exercise isn't the correct course of action — effectively managing asthma is the key to helping children stay healthy."

## CREATE A PLAN

A primary element of asthma management should be the development of an exercise plan. With the help of a primary healthcare provider or your child's pediatrician, parents and children can create a program of activities that will be less likely to trigger asthma symptoms.

"Symptoms like wheezing indicate that asthma is not well-controlled," Dr. Kerby said. "The truth is that the majority of children who have their asthma under control can do whatever they want with the right exercise plan."

## LESS EXERCISE = MORE HEALTH PROBLEMS

One of the most troubling medical headlines today is the dramatic increase in childhood obesity. Propelling this epidemic is an overall decrease in physical activity, and as a result, many children with asthma aren't getting the exercise they need.

Asthma sufferers who get limited exercise are more

likely to become obese. The cycle is then continued because obesity can further complicate asthma symptoms by putting additional stress on airway function.

## GET IN THE GAME

Although every individual has specific symptom triggers, team sports that require short energy bursts — such as baseball, gymnastics and football — tend to be more compatible with asthma sufferers than endurance sports like soccer or distance running.

Through Children's Asthma Management Program, children experiencing asthma symptoms can undergo necessary testing to determine their levels of lung functioning, which can identify appropriate levels of activity to keep symptoms under control and avoid complications. After an expert at Children's reviews the test results, a plan can be developed so children can take part in daily exercise activities.

"All children need to exercise," Dr. Kerby said. "It is our job to create a plan that accommodates each asthma patient."

For more information about The Children's Hospital's Asthma Management Program, visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and click on "Conditions We Treat," then "Asthma, Breathing and Lung."

## FAST FACT

According to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, nearly one in six athletes at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics was diagnosed with exercise-induced asthma. At a previous Summer Olympics, nearly one-third of U.S. Olympians who had asthma won team or individual medals — a higher percentage than athletes without asthma.

# Breastfeeding Benefits Last a Lifetime

Although breastfeeding can be challenging during the first few weeks, more evidence has emerged that breastfeeding offers babies health benefits that last throughout their lives.

Experts agree breast milk is the perfect food for babies. While meeting unique nutritional needs, breast milk also protects infants from a variety of illnesses, including gastrointestinal infections.

According to a new study, breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months can help prevent gastrointestinal problems. Breastfeeding also decreases the incidence

of other infections, including meningitis, respiratory tract infections, ear infections, sepsis and intestinal infections in premature infants.

“Breastfed infants have more beneficial *bifida* bacteria lining their intestinal tracts, which inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria and helps to fight infection,” said Maya Bunik, MD, MSPH, Medical Director of the Child Health Clinic at The Children’s Hospital and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. “The benefits are relative to how much breast milk is consumed, so the less supplementation with formula and the longer the infant is breastfed, the more protection will be offered against diseases.”

For more information about breastfeeding or to access lactation resources, visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and search for “breastfeeding.”



## FAST FACT

The Nursing Mothers’ Act for Workplace Accommodation supports Colorado women who choose to breastfeed after they return to work. Colorado is the 16<sup>th</sup> state to have a workplace law to support breastfeeding mothers, advocating for cooperation from employers and a hygienic place to pump.

# THE TRUTH About Lying

Whether you have a toddler, grade-school child or teenager, as a parent you will find that children lie for many different reasons. While catching your child in a lie may be disappointing, understanding the reasons behind the lie can help you handle the situation appropriately.

You might be surprised to learn most children lie about small things. As a parent, you should certainly explain why you are disappointed, but recognize that lying about small things is normal.

## WHY KIDS LIE

Lying may not necessarily indicate a problem. For example, toddlers don’t understand the difference between truth and lies. In addition, those who lie at a young age often are found to have high intelligence levels and good social skills in adolescence.

Knowing why kids lie can help you determine how to guide your child toward proper behavior. Use the following breakdown to help you respond appropriately:

- **Toddlers** may lie for self-serving reasons, like saying their diaper isn’t dirty to avoid a diaper change while they are playing. Punishment isn’t necessary, but gently explain why lying is wrong.

- **Preschoolers** often tell tall tales, which generally aren’t problematic unless they cause issues in your child’s real-life relationships.
- **Grade-school kids** lie for various reasons, so use your discretion when addressing your child about a lie. You may find one child lying to avoid hurting someone’s feelings while another may be avoiding punishment. When talking with your child, remember to encourage habits that promote personal responsibility.
- **Teens and preteens** may begin to seek more personal privacy, so if a parent asks a question that a teen feels is intrusive, he or she may choose to lie, especially if the child believes the parent will disapprove of the truth. Talk with your child about inappropriate behavior and discuss the consequences for behaving inappropriately, as well as the punishment for lying about it.

*If you suspect deeper issues, talk with your family doctor about a referral to a behavioral health specialist at The Children’s Hospital.*

Sources: [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org), [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org) and [www.parenting.com](http://www.parenting.com)



## Your Diabetes Questions Answered

Each day, 40 children in the United States are diagnosed with diabetes. By recognizing the signs and symptoms, you can ensure your child receives the treatment needed to continue enjoying a healthy, active life.

**P**hil Zeitler, MD, PhD, endocrinologist at The Children's Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, discusses how diabetes affects children.

**Parenting Question:** What is the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes?

**Dr. Zeitler:** In Type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system destroys the cells that release insulin, eventually eliminating insulin production from the body. Without insulin, cells cannot absorb sugar, which they need to produce energy.

Type 2 diabetes can develop at any age and is caused by inactivity and poor diet in children who are overweight or obese. In people with Type 2 diabetes, the body becomes resistant to insulin or may not produce enough insulin to create normal glucose levels. Unlike Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 often can be prevented.

**Parenting Question:** My five-year-old son is always thirsty and seems to have to use the restroom more than

my other children. Could these be signs of diabetes?

**Dr. Zeitler:** Increased urination and thirst could be signs of Type 1 diabetes. Some of the most common signs include extreme hunger yet loss of weight, extreme weakness, fatigue and abdominal pain. Type 2 diabetes symptoms can be similar to those of Type 1 diabetes but generally accompany obesity and inactivity.

**Parenting Question:** If a child is diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, will it prohibit him from having a "normal" childhood?

**Dr. Zeitler:** No, children with either diabetes type can live normal lives through proper management and understanding of the condition.

*If you have a question about your child's health that you would like answered, e-mail us at [mychildshealth@thechildrenshospital.org](mailto:mychildshealth@thechildrenshospital.org).*

Do you have a question about your child's health that you would like to see answered here? E-mail us at [mychildshealth@thechildrenshospital.org](mailto:mychildshealth@thechildrenshospital.org).

## Helping Families Cope With Serious Illness

Cancers and blood disorders conjure feelings of fear and anxiety, especially if you're forced to watch your own child fight for survival.

The Children's Hospital offers resources you and your child need to battle these diseases.

**T**he hematology/oncology (HEM/ONC) unit, which opened at The Children's Hospital Rick Wilson Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders in October 2007, is equipped with 24 inpatient beds, an outpatient clinic and an infusion center, enabling patients in the Denver metro area to receive care within their home community. With the resources available through this addition, Children's is able to provide top-quality cancer care for children and adolescents from birth through their early 20s who are facing the following:

- Blood diseases
- Bone marrow transplantation
- Cancers, such as leukemia

### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

With well over 80 percent of pediatric cancer patients now finding cures for their conditions,

The Children's Hospital Rick Wilson Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders continues to provide the highest level of services while performing pioneering research to improve cure rates.

"Our goal in the HEM/ONC unit is to provide an atmosphere that is comfortable for both patients and their families while striving to improve our patients' chances for recovery," said Stephen Hunger, Chief of the Section of Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplantation and Ergen Family Chair in Pediatric Cancer at Children's. "By having a compassionate team of nurses and physicians who provide care for children and adolescents, we have created an environment that is not available anywhere else in the region."

*For more information about the Rick Wilson Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at The Children's Hospital, visit [www.thechildrenshospital.com](http://www.thechildrenshospital.com) and select "Conditions We Treat."*



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# Seasonal Allergies and Colds:

## How to Tell the Difference

Your child came home from school with a runny nose and a cough. Do you immediately head for the cold medicine? Could the symptoms indicate something else?

When your child comes down with the sniffles, you may think it's just a cold, but your child could be suffering from seasonal allergies. Common colds are caused by a virus, whereas seasonal allergies are reactions to environmental substances, such as pollen, smoke, dust or pet dander. Colds and seasonal allergies present very similar symptoms, including watery eyes, runny nose and fatigue.

### WHICH IS WHICH?

**Allergies** are caused by an immune system response and often occur in patterns. Symptoms may include a runny or stuffy nose, watery eyes, sneezing or wheezing. If you notice your child struggling with these symptoms at the same time every year — especially as the seasons change — that's a good indication

that his or her symptoms may be caused by seasonal allergies. While allergies rarely affect children under age one, they normally peak after age five with increased symptoms.

**Common colds** are often contracted from other people. If your child has come in contact with another sick child at daycare or school, chances are he caught a cold from a classmate. Symptoms often are the same as those of allergies but also may include fever, aches and pains. While allergy symptoms begin immediately, cold symptoms may take a few days to fully develop.

"For parents, observing their child's health can be extremely important," said Amy Shriver, MD, Clinical Instructor of Pediatrics at The Children's Hospital and Instructor of Pediatrics at University

of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. "Over time, parents can become more familiar with patterns of symptoms, which can make a diagnosis much easier to confirm."

For more information on childhood colds and allergies, please visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org) and search for "colds and allergies."

### FAST FACTS

- On average, healthy kids contract six colds a year.
- An estimated 2 million school days per year are missed by children due to allergies.
- Common summer allergy triggers in Colorado include pollen from grasses, trees and weeds, dust mites, mold spores and pet dander.

Sources: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) and [www.coloradoallergy.com](http://www.coloradoallergy.com)