Health Promotion for the Pediatric Population

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Abstract

The intentions of this presentation are to explain health promotion topics related to the pediatric population. The pediatric population goes through many changes and milestones from infancy through adolescence. The purpose of this presentation is to explain health promotion topics related to this population by exploring various stages of life, associated milestones, and skills that could contribute to health, preschool, school-age, and adolescence. Our goal is to provide information to better the well-being of the pediatric population and help provide caregivers with better insight into what their child may be experiencing during various stages of life. We provide topics based on each group in relation to development, milestones, and skills deemed appropriate for that group.

Health Promotion within infancy should consist of play and early learning, as well as the promotion of safety, nutrition, sleep, rest, and appropriate discipline.

- Play is a major socializing medium for toddlers. Toddlers typically engage in parallel play, in which they play alongside another child rather than cooperatively. It is important for parents to provide a variety of toys to allow for different opportunities to explore the environment. Toddlers need at least 30 minutes of unstructured physical activity and anywhere from 1 to several hours of unstructured physical activity per day.

- Promoting language development during toddlerhood should involve talking or singing to the toddler during routine activities such as feeding or dressing. The caregiver should use frequent, repetitive naming to help the toddler learn appropriate words for body parts and objects and should help the toddler choose appropriate words to label emotions. Reading toddlers daily is the best way to promote language development.

- Safety is a prime concern throughout toddlerhood. The toddler should ride in the back seat of the car, in a rear-facing car seat with harness straps and a clip until 2 years of age. After 2 years, a forward-facing car seat may be used. It is imperative for parents to avoid cigarette smoking entirely to best protect their children. To prevent injury, toddlers should be supervised, at all times, when in or around water. Safety gates should be installed, doors should be locked to dangerous rooms, and firearms, electrical cords, matches and potentially poisonous substances should be kept out of reach.

- Promoting nutrition should be inclusive of high nutrient rich foods. Toddler require an average intake of 500 mg of calcium per day, which may include dairy products, broccoli, oranges, etc. Toddlers tend to be limited in age 16-24 or pounds, increase fluid intake, and increase solids for children to the next level of development.

- Promoting healthy sleep and rest involves the 18-month-old getting 13.5 hours of sleep per night, the 24-month-old 13 hours, and the 3-year-old 12 hours. The toddler should sleep through the night and have one nap during the day. Consistent bedtime rituals should be encouraged and “co-sleeping” should be discouraged.

- To promote healthy teeth and gums, poor oral hygiene, prolonged use of sippy-cups, lack of fluoride intake, and delayed or absent professional dental care should be avoided. Bottle weaning should occur by 12-15 months and the first dental visit should occur at age 1. Brushing should begin with the use of water and advance to a very small amount of fluoridated toothpaste beginning at 2 years of age.

- Appropriate discipline involves giving a positive focus, offering limited choices, using role model communication, using the correct tone of voice, and addressing the child’s aggressive behavior calmly, but firmly and consistent.

Toddlerhood - 2 Years

Preschool 3-5 Years

School-Aged 6-12 Years

Health promotion for a school aged child is critical in promoting their overall well-being and facilitation into adolescence. Rapid physical growth, nutrition consumption, socialization and exercise are a few crucial aspects of health promotion.

- School-aged children should be eating fruits and vegetables with every meal, given a say in what they eat, separated from play and meal-time, and eating with groups such as family as much as possible. There is also a great stress on breakfast consumption in this group to promote the rapid mental and physical development of the child.

- Given the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity, it is suggested that parents limit caloric intake and replace nutrient-poor foods with healthy options just so the child “eats something.” A diet consisting of all food groups is recommended. Allow child to decide how much food, if any, they are going to eat. High fiber, nutrient poor foods should not be substituted for healthy options just so the child “eats something.”

- Promoting growth through exercise. High levels of physical activity may reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors and provide disease prevention against cancer, obesity, osteoporosis, diabetes, and depression. Adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, through walking, physical activity clubs, and sports.

- Promoting social development through sports. Sports and games provide an opportunity to interact with peers while enjoying socially accepted behaviors and playing. These allow the preschooler to learn how to share, take turns, listen to opinions, use self-control, communicate, pay attention, and explore complex social ideas such as power, compassion, and loyalty.

- Children need a safe, responsive home environment that promotes learning and exploring. Preschoolers also need to be taught socially accepted behaviors that will be needed in school. Parents serve as role models for behavior related to education, learning, and the development of social skills in the child. Preschoolers typically require 85 kcal/kg of body weight, 700-1,000 mg of calcium, and 7-10 mg of iron daily. They should consume 19 mg dietary fiber daily. Total fat should be no less than 20% but no more than 35% of total caloric intake.

- A diet consisting of all food groups is recommended. Allow child to decide how much food, if any, they are going to eat. High-fat, nutrient poor foods should not be substituted for healthy options just so the child “eats something.”

- A preschooler needs about 11-12 hours of sleep each night. Bedtime rituals tend to be beneficial and reassuring to children. Spanking is the least effective discipline practice. A simple and clear explanation of misbehavior should be given.

Infancy 0-12 Months

Health promotion during infancy is a vast topic. While all aspects are important, this portion will focus on sleep, safety, feeding, excretion.

- Sleep safety is one of the most important aspects of infant health promotion. Some important things to remember are to place the infant on their back while sleeping. Use a mattress and fitted sheet in a safety approved crib. Avoid overcrowding cribs with stuffed animals, pillows and heavy blankets. Do not share a bed with the infant.

- Feeding is another extremely important aspect of infancy. Breastfeeding is extremely beneficial, with decreased risk of ear and respiratory infections, obesity, asthma and SIDS. It is recommended that this is continued exclusively for 6 months. At that time solid foods can begin to be introduced beginning by weaning with grain cereals and pureed fruits and vegetables. Finger foods such as soft vegetables and fruits, finely cut meats, scrambled eggs and well-cooked pasta can gradually be introduced as well.

- Excretion is a helpful indicator on infant health. Assess the frequency of urination, which should occur every 1-4 hours. Make note of color, any signs of blood or distress while urinating. Also assess frequency, color and consistency of the stool. An infant should have a bowel movement at least once daily, but early months can consist of 5-10 daily. Color can be tan, brown or green. Black, red or white colors should be brought to the attention of a doctor. Consistency can be runny, soft or loose depending on the diet, and breastfeeding can give a slightly extreme diarrheas should be reported to the doctor.

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- The stimulation of developmental thinking as well as language is possible when parents ask open-ended questions. Parents should avoid swearing because the child is sure to repeat the words even if they know what they mean or not.

- Books with pictures that tell stories and repeat phrases help keep the child’s attention.

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- The back seat of a car is always the safest. All children up to 4 years of age whose height meets the requirements should ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and top tether. After surpassing the recommended height, the child should ride in a booster seat that uses lap and shoulder belts.

- Parents should protect their children from second-hand tobacco smoke; Never tell a child that medication is “candy”; Store dangerous fluids as well as medications in the original container’s out of preschoolers reach; Poison control number (1-800-222-1222) should be posted on or near a home phone; Make sure child knows to stop at the curb when a ball rolls into the middle of the street; The child must wear an approved bicycle helmet whenever riding a bike; Parents should install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and never leave children unattended in or near the water.

- Preschoolers typically require 85 kcal/kg of body weight, 700-1,000 mg of calcium, and 7-10 mg of iron daily. They should consume 19 mg dietary fiber daily. Daily total fat should be no less than 20% but no more than 35% of total caloric intake.

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Preschool 3-5 Years

Adolescence 13-18 Years

Health promotion during adolescence involves multiple groups to promote healthy growth and development.

- Promoting growth through exercise. High levels of physical activity may reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors and provide disease prevention against cancer, obesity, osteoporosis, diabetes, and depression. Adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, through walking, physical activity clubs, and sports.

- Promoting social development through sports. Sports and games provide an opportunity to interact with peers while enjoying socially accepted behaviors and playing. These allow the preschooler to learn how to share, take turns, listen to opinions, use self-control, communicate, pay attention, and explore complex social ideas such as power, compassion, and loyalty.

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