

UPDATE

health

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A Smart Well-Baby Visit

When you're visiting your pediatrician for a regularly scheduled checkup, it's important to understand everything she tells you and to get the answers to any questions you may have. Here, some tips on how to have a successful well-baby (or older-child) visit.

✦ **Prepare a list of questions before your child's appointment.** Remember that your pediatrician can address lots of different issues, involving education, discipline, behavior, emotional development, and, of course, health concerns.

✦ **Ask questions as they come up.** If you wait until the end of the visit, you may not remember your specific questions, and the pediatrician may not have enough time to address them. If your pediatrician prefers that you ask your questions after the check-up, bring along a pen and a piece of paper, and jot down your questions as they arise.

✦ **Ask about your doctor's office policies.** Does the office have a 24-hour emergency number? Can you call your pediatrician at home in an emergency? Also ask how non-emergency situations are handled.

Getting Covered

Navigating the managed-care maze with a healthy child is hard enough, but understanding your child's health plan in an emergency can be frightening if you're not prepared.

Here are some tips from the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Maternal and Child Health Bureau to help you decipher your coverage and make sure your child is protected in an emergency.

• **Plan ahead.** Before enrolling in a health-care plan, ask about its policies regarding emergency care. Many plans require you to notify them before your child is admitted to an emergency department. Others may require you to notify them within 24 to 72 hours after the visit in order to receive reimbursement. An emergency department will never refuse to give a child care, but you may end up paying the bill if you don't fully understand your plan's policies.

• **Use your plan wisely.** Find out if your plan provides any special features.

For example, some offer safety classes for parents and reduced rates on bike helmets and child-safety seats.

• **Stay safe on the road.** Talk with your pediatrician about the doctors and hospitals that your plan will cover if your child is sick or injured away from home. Be sure you understand what procedures need to be followed and what provisions need to be made in an emergency.

Learn more about your child's health by watching the **HEALTHY KIDS SHOW**, Saturdays and Sundays at 8:30 AM, on the FX cable channel. The show is hosted by Karina Gomez, shown below with son Charlie. Also, look for the **AMERICAN BABY SHOW**, Saturdays and Sundays at 8 AM.



Healthy Easter!

When you fill your child's Easter basket with chocolate bunnies, neon-yellow marshmallow chicks, and jumbo-size jelly beans, you're also helping to fill his mouth with cavities. So why not opt for a healthier basket this year?

To cut down on overall sugar consumption, choose Easter confections packaged in single servings and "mini" chocolate sculptures rather than the larger versions. And instead of cramming baskets with sweet treats, include a few fun alternatives—like a coloring book and pastel-colored crayons, a cuddly stuffed bunny, and a puzzle or book—to stimulate your child's imagination instead of his sweet tooth!

If you're hunting for activities that emphasize fun rather than nibbling, make homemade holiday cards with your child, and deliver them to neighbors. Or create egg-shaped picture frames with cardboard and colored paper, and adorn them with glue and glitter.

