

Keeping Me Safe

I am ready to start school and to do other activities without you. That means you won't always be near by to keep me safe. But I still need you to teach me what is safe and what isn't safe. I also need you to help make sure the world around me is safe.

Most childhood injuries can be predicted and prevented. Here are some **simple guidelines** to help keep me safe at 5 years old...and beyond.

Falls are the leading cause of hospital visits for childhood injuries

- I need to wear the right protective gear if I am skating, skateboarding, in-line skating, skiing or doing similar kinds of sports.
- Whenever possible, I should take lessons to learn a new sport or activity, like skiing or in-line skating.
- Don't let me sleep on the top bunk of bunk beds until I am at least 6 years old.
- Teach me to always wear a helmet when I ride a tricycle or bicycle.
- If I have a swing set or other climbing toys in my yard, make sure they are on a soft surface like grass, sand or wood chips.

Car Safety

- I am safest in a booster seat until I weigh 36 kilograms (80 pounds) or reach the age of 8. Until then, the seatbelt does not fit my small body properly.
- When I outgrow my booster seat, I can sit on the seat and be strapped in with a seat belt.
- I am safest when I sit in the back seat. **Never** let me sit in the front seat if our car has a passenger-side air bag. Children and even small adults can be injured when an air bag inflates.
- I must always wear my seatbelt correctly, including putting the shoulder belt in front of me.

House and Neighborhood

- I won't really understand pedestrian safety until I am about 9 years old. I still need an adult or older child to stay with me when I am around traffic or crossing a street.
- Check my bicycle often to make sure it is safe.
- Walk around our vehicle before you back out of the driveway to make sure there are no children or toys behind it.
- Teach me how to check out tobogganing hills to make sure they are safe. A safe hill is not too steep, with a long, flat area at the bottom of the hill and no trees or other big things in the way.
- I need to wear several layers of clothing when I play outside in the winter, instead of one heavy layer.
- Always turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- If you haven't already, set our hot water heater to below 50°C.
- Lock up or put out of reach all poisons, medicines, household cleaners and alcoholic beverages.
- Know first aid for poisoning and keep the phone number for the Poison Control Centre close to the phone. The phone number in Alberta is **1-800-332-1414**.

Water Safety

- Enroll in a water safety program, to learn how to swim and how to stay safe around water.
- Never leave me alone near a wading or swimming pool, lake or ocean, even if I know how to swim.

Animals and Children

- Help me to know when a pet or other animal is angry and could hurt me.

Fire Safety

- Teach me how to "stop, drop and roll" if my clothes catch fire.
- Make sure our house has smoke detectors that work.
- Plan and practice how our family will get out of the house if there is a fire.

Questions?

If you have any questions concerning your child's healthy growth and development, please contact your community health nurse at your local health region office.

5 years and beyond

Growth and Development Series



All About Me



Hi. I am your 5-year-old child.

I am my own person. I know what I like and what I don't like and I want to make my own choices. I have my own way of doing things. I might do some things before other children and I may do some things after them. Be patient. I will get there in my own time.

To help you know what to expect, here are some common milestones most children reach in the coming years.

Growth

Body

- I will grow at my own rate. My growth rate may be very different from other children and even from my own brothers and sisters. Ask our doctor or community health nurse for a growth chart to keep track of changes in my height and weight.
- My rate of growth will slow down for the next 7 years or so. I will probably have a growth spurt when I am around 12 years old.
- I might reach my adult height when I am in my early teen years or I might grow until I am 20 years old.

Teeth

- My baby teeth will start to fall out when I am about 6 years old. I will start to get my permanent teeth when I am between 6 and 8 years old and will continue to get new teeth until I am about 12 or 13 years old. My wisdom teeth will probably come in after I am 17 years old.
- To prevent cavities, I need to brush my teeth with a child's soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- I can brush my own teeth but I need your help to thoroughly brush and floss my teeth at least once a day (bedtime is the best time) until I am about 8 years old.
- I should visit my dentist regularly.

Development

Language

After 5 years old:

- I will speak clearly and with good grammar.
- A person who does not know me should understand almost everything I say.
- I might still have problems saying the r, l, s, sh and th sounds.
- I will talk for fun, friendship or to achieve a purpose.
- I can carry on conversations and tell complete stories.
- I understand humor and know when people are joking.
- I like to listen to you read me all kinds of books, such as alphabet books, fairy tales and rhyming stories like Dr. Seuss.
- I might get ear infections. If I seem to be having trouble hearing, take me to a doctor as soon as possible.
- If I am not talking clearly and doing the things above, take me to a speech-pathologist.

Movement

- I am much stronger and have more energy than when I was younger.
- I can run and play a game at the same time, like soccer.
- I am good at hopping and skipping.
- I can learn how to ride a two-wheel bicycle, with your help.
- I can use my hands to do things like tying shoelaces, using a knife and fork or hitting a nail on the head with a hammer.
- I can draw a picture of a person with a body, arms, legs, feet and at least 4 other body parts.
- At 5 years old, I can probably print simple words and my own name.

Sexual Health

Children learn about sexuality daily and continue learning throughout their lives. Sexuality is an awareness of our entire self as a male or female. This is basic to healthy sexual development.

- I may be curious about pregnancy and birth. I might ask questions like "Where do babies come from?" or "Why can't I have a baby?" I need simple, honest answers and always use the correct names.

- Most of my friends may be the same sex as I am.
- I am finding my place in the bigger world e.g., school, friends.
- I might repeat a "bad" word. Please tell me what it means and why not to use it.
- I need to have open communication with you to get the correct information and understand our family's values. This helps me develop a positive attitude and a healthy respect towards sexuality.

Behavior and Emotions

Thinking, Feeling and Doing

- I am becoming more modest. For example, I might be shy about letting you or other people see me without my clothes on.
- I try to tell the truth and expect other people to tell me the truth.
- I can control my desire to do certain things and know how to behave around other people.
- I need your praise and approval.
- I don't like being corrected and am easily hurt when someone is angry with me.
- I can understand simple instructions and reasons.
- I am possessive of my toys and other belongings but I like to show them to other people.
- I can show my emotions but may not be able to talk about how I feel.
- I can help with household chores, like making my bed and putting away my toys.
- I need you to teach me about the feelings and rights of other people.

Toilet Habits and Grooming

- I might still pee my bed at night. I will probably grow out of it in the next few years. In fact, one in 10 children over the age of 5 still wet their beds. If you are worried about my bed-wetting, talk to our doctor or community health nurse.
- I can dress myself and might want to choose my own clothes.

Playing

- I like to draw, paint and do other crafts.
- I like to play outside and should be encouraged to play with other children.
- I understand and can play competitive games with other children, like team sports and board games.
- I might like toys with working parts.
- I can play computer games made for children my age.

Eating

- I am growing more slowly now and don't need to eat as much food as I ate when I was younger.
- My appetite will probably go up and down.
- I might like or not like the same foods my friends like or don't like.
- I need to eat a variety of foods from the four main food groups: vegetables and fruits, milk products, grain products (including breads), and meat and meat alternates.
- Some good snacks between meals are raw vegetables, fruit, cheese, whole grain muffins, plain crackers and yogurt. Sweet, sticky foods can make me less hungry at mealtime and can give me cavities.
- If you have any questions about how much food or the type of food I should eat, talk to our community health nurse or doctor.

Physical Activity

- I should be encouraged to grow up physically active.
- I like to do fun things with you that keep us both active.
- Some of the activities I might like are walking, running, bike riding, skating, playing soccer, dancing, skipping rope and swimming.

