

Why do I need to bring my child into the office for yearly check-ups?

Children are not “little adults” and many changes occur from year to year. Your child’s growth is an important sign of health and the annual physical examination is a very important safeguard. Letting us see your child every year allows our providers the extra time to examine your child, including areas not inspected during most sick visits.

What you can expect during your annual exam:

- The opportunity for our parents to ask the provider any questions that have come up during the year as well as discuss health and school or learning concerns.
- Your child will be weighed and measured so that his/her growth can be plotted on national growth charts. This allows us to assess overweight, underweight and general nutrition. We accurately measure your child’s height, making sure that the height velocity is normal. Healthy height velocity suggests normal levels of growth hormone and other factors necessary for steady growth.
- Standard childhood vaccines are administered and highly recommended. The science behind vaccines is clear. They are safe and effective.
- Our providers check your child for innumerable problems by observation and palpation. We check the back for scoliosis, the heart for the development of a heart murmur or rhythm changes. We palpate the abdomen and carefully check the lymph nodes to help detect early swellings or enlargement of the organs that may be the first signs of a silent disease or even a tumor.

Additional reasons for a yearly physical exam:

- Many sports programs require a current physical examination for participation, and we agree with that requirement. We are concerned that “sports physicals” at schools or clinics are typically not as thorough as our complete physical examinations done by our board certified pediatrician or pediatric nurse practitioner. Furthermore, we are not able to complete a school or sports health forms unless we do the evaluation.
- If your child is on prescription medications, we require an annual physical in our office in order to continue writing those prescriptions.
- If a minor problem is discovered, your doctor can advise you on testing that may be necessary, initiate a treatment program, or help decide when your youngster may benefit from seeing a specialist.