

Infant Health Checklist

Honors Thesis

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Abstract

This study was done to provide a dependable resource for parents to use in deciding which health care provider they should contact based on the symptoms their child is showing. Parents are constantly using internet resources to seek health advice for themselves and their children. Many times the resources they use are not reliable and may cause troubles in receiving appropriate treatment in a timely manner. Studies show parents are eager for physicians' guidance in seeking health advice. In light of this need, a Fact Sheet, to be reviewed and modified by the State Parenting Extension Specialists, has been created to provide a more reliable source of information for parents to use. Stillwater Pediatrics helped in creating the infographic to ensure sound medical advice was given. The infographic is a guide to parents in deciding what action to take in the times that a child is sick. If a parent has any questions or concerns in regards to their child's health, it is important that they contact the family pediatrician.

Infant Health Checklist

A Guide for Parents to Know What Steps to Take When the Infant Shows Signs of Illness

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Why Reliable Resources are Important

Parents may think that they can diagnose their child's health and medical issues through quick internet searches. However, many internet sources do not have the credibility desired for accurate diagnosis. For adults, it may be fairly simple to identify a plausible cause of symptoms and see a physician when time allows. Where children are concerned, having a more accurate diagnosis may help parents in deciding what actions to take while also keeping emergency rooms more clear of patients who could be seen elsewhere.

Parents need sources of health information that are reliable and accurate for the child's benefit. Parents should seek advice from medical professionals, specifically medical practitioners that specialize in infant and child health. Reliable sources will provide parents with information that can guide them in deciding on their child's health care and help them feel more confident in their decision-making. Reliable resources also help parents feel better prepared and more knowledgeable about their healthcare visits. This infographic is one such resource.

Research Findings

- In 2015, the CDC reported that 96.5% of children 4 years or younger had some sort of contact with a health professional. This is vital information because it indicates that parents of almost all children are seeking some form of medical treatment.
- A 2008 study showed that 98% of parents with young children who sought treatment for one of their children in a pediatric emergency department (ED) used at least one source (general practitioners, internet, etc.) to try to determine the health problems of one of their children prior to going to the ED in a 6 month timespan. The internet was used by 43% of parents, and the majority of these parents wanted more guidance from health care professionals in seeking reliable health information when using the internet (Khoo et. al, 2008).

Making a Decision Prior to Emergency Room Visits

The emergency room is meant for patients who need to be treated immediately or are in critical condition. On the one hand, if a parent thinks that an infant or child is experiencing symptoms that are emergent or the parents are referred to the emergency room by a doctor, seeking help in the emergency room is important. On the other hand, emergency rooms should not be the first choice in all circumstances, because infants and young children are at a higher risk of contracting airborne diseases from being in the emergency room. To keep them healthy, it is always best to stay away from larger crowds until their immune system is more developed. If the child is exposed to a large crowd of sick people, then they are more likely to contract more illnesses than they came in with. Because children are able to get sicker faster, emergency rooms are more likely to take the sick children in first to prevent any further illnesses.

Making a decision about the appropriateness of seeking emergency care prior to going to the emergency room can be beneficial for the child as well as for other patients. By being properly prepared, parents will be able to make a more informed decision on their children's healthcare and children will get the appropriate care they need. Children ultimately benefit from the parents making a more informed decision because they may be protected from exposed illnesses in a crowded health facility that they could have avoided.

Infographic to Guide Parents



*Call 911 if...

- unconscious
- breathing has stopped
- change in skin color (i.e. blue coloring)
- bone sticking out of the skin
- new prolonged seizure is occurring
- unresponsive



Go to the ER if...

- possible broken bone
- gash in the skin
- major burn (blistering or burn covers large surface area)
- eye injury
- ingestion of poison
- allergic reaction
- severe dehydration (no urine output in 8 hours)
- stiff body parts
- respiratory distress



**Go to urgent care if...

- stitches are needed
- minor burn (no blistering, red)
- minor cuts
- ear pain with no relief from pain medication



Call the doctor if...

- temperature (under 2 months: 100.4°F is an immediate concern; 2+ months: 100.4°F consistently for several hours with other symptoms)
- mild dehydration
- signs of infection
- change in feeding patterns
- excessive crying
- excessive vomiting
- cough
- sores in the mouth
- flu symptoms
- ear infection
- change in stools
- nose blockage

*If child has lost consciousness or ability to breathe, one person should begin administering CPR while the other calls 911

** If it is the weekend or after hours and a doctor is not available, visiting the closest urgent care is the best source of care if the problem cannot wait until the next day.

You, the parent, are the person who is most aware of your child's needs in the moment. If the condition of your child is dire, you must seek immediate care because infants and young children's symptoms can worsen very rapidly.

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Reflection

Prior to this project, I had no idea what an Extension Office was or what they provided to the general public. Wanting to go into healthcare, I feel as if I was able to bring a new and exciting idea to the Extension Office. Throughout the process I also learned the importance of being diligent in a project and doing something you love. This project quickly became something I talked about to everyone and was so excited to get to complete.

Now that the project is completed, Stillwater Pediatrics has a copy of the final draft and may possibly use it in the future for their parents to have a guide in caring for their children. The project will continue after my graduation through Dr. Hubbs-Tait as it is released for external review to hopefully one day be published and used by parents!

I am extremely grateful for the guidance provided by Dr. Hubbs-Tait, Dr. Hendrix, and the physicians of Stillwater Pediatrics. Thank you for making this project something I have thoroughly enjoyed and something I will remember for a lifetime!