Medical Milestones
Guiding your child through broken bones, stitches and other not-so-fun scenarios

Stay Safe at Home
This Spring

A Night to Remember
Preparing Your Teen for Prom

Check out our healthy living tips in the Child Health Library at www.childrensmercy.org.
Prom is a rite of passage for many high school students, but it only takes one wrong decision to turn a memorable evening into a negative experience with serious consequences. Help your teens avoid prom pitfalls by talking with them beforehand and making your stance on safety clear.

Parents typically have two concerns about their children on prom night: substance use/abuse and sexual behavior,” says Daryl Lynch, MD, Section Chief, Adolescent Medicine at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics and Professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine. “Recent brain development research has shown that teens act more recklessly when in groups of their peers. A group mentality takes over a teen’s decision-making ability, making him or her more likely to act recklessly or carelessly.”

Consider the following tips to help your kids have a safe, fun and memorable prom night.

• Have a pre-prom conversation with your teen. Make sure to discuss responsible behavior, but also let him know he can turn to you if he gets into trouble.
• Attend a prom safety education program with your teen at her school or in the community.
• Provide safe, supervised alternatives to all-night partying, such as hosting an after-prom get-together in your home for your teen and his friends.

For more prom safety tips, visit the Child Health Library at www.childrensmercy.org.

A Healthy Meal on the Go

Finding time for a nutritious, home-cooked meal can be difficult. However, you can make smart decisions for your children even when eating out.

Many menu items in both fast food and sit-down restaurants are loaded with fat, calories and cholesterol. As unhealthy food choices can lead to obesity, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other health complications, it’s important that you help your child develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime.

The next time you find yourself in the drive-through, follow these tips from Sarah Hampl, MD, Weight Management Program Director at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine.

• Cut liquid calories. Have your child drink skim or low-fat milk or water instead of soda.
• Have it grilled. As a general rule, grilled foods are often a healthier option than fried versions.
• Make a substitute. Ask if you can get apple slices or a side salad with low-fat dressing instead of fries.
• Just get the sandwich. If a restaurant doesn’t have healthy side options, bring along baby carrots or yogurt from home.

“The best way to show your child the importance of healthy eating is to set a good example,” says Dr. Hampl. “Make sure to select healthy options yourself and always commend your child for choosing healthy foods on his or her own.”

For more healthy eating ideas your kids will love, visit www.childrensmercy.org and search for “healthy eating.”
Children occasionally sustain minor injuries or experience mild illnesses that don’t necessarily require emergency care but call for medical attention nonetheless. If your pediatrician is unable to examine your child, he or she may refer you to an urgent care center.

Children’s Mercy works with community physicians to provide urgent care to meet this need at Children’s Mercy South and Children’s Mercy Northland.

Common conditions treated at urgent care centers include:
• abdominal pain
• allergic reactions
• broken bones
• colds
• dehydration
• ear infections
• fever
• minor head injuries
• minor trauma
• respiratory problems
• sore throats
• vomiting

“We are a unique urgent care facility in that our entire staff specializes in pediatric urgent care and emergency medicine,” says Milton Fowler, Jr., MD, Section Chief and Medical Director, Children’s Mercy South Urgent Care and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine. “Many conditions will present differently in children than in adults, so having that age-specific experience is extremely important.”

The urgent care centers have a variety of medical professionals on staff, including respiratory specialists, child life specialists, social workers, mental health specialists and inpatient pharmacists, to handle a variety of medical needs. However, if an emergency occurs, call 911.

“Any incident involving major trauma, unconsciousness or complications arising from significant underlying medical problems should be handled immediately by an emergency department,” says Dr. Fowler. “These conditions may require the intervention of emergency subspecialists and should be treated as quickly as possible.”

A Continuum of Care

The urgent care centers at Children’s Mercy work together with primary care providers in the community to ensure patients receive follow-up visits when necessary.

“Our staff makes a full report of each patient’s visit and faxes copies to the child’s pediatrician or family physician for review,” says Nancy Tait, BSN, RN, CPN, Nurse Manager of Urgent Care at Children’s Mercy South. “We understand that families feel comfortable with their primary care physicians, and we are here to alleviate pain, suffering or discomfort children may experience at an inopportune hour when their physicians are not available.”

To learn more about urgent care services at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, call (816) 234-3188.

You arrive home from work to find your child with a high fever and an earache. You call your pediatrician and tell her it’s not an emergency, but you’d feel better if someone could examine your child tonight.

Children’s Mercy Urgent Care Centers

**Children’s Mercy Northland**
Hours: Noon to 10 p.m., seven days a week
501 N.W. Barry Road
Kansas City, MO 64155

**Children’s Mercy South**
Hours: 24 hours a day, seven days a week
5808 W. 110th Street
Overland Park, KS 66211

Note: Call your child’s pediatrician before heading to an urgent care center.
From breaking bones to getting stitches, there are several health milestones children may encounter while growing up. Here’s how to help your child tackle them head on.

Knowing how stressful these events can be for both parents and children, Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics offers this guide to coping with each of these un-fun health milestones.

1. Broken Bones

While it’s impossible for parents to plan for a broken bone, it is important to take preventive steps.

“If there’s protective equipment for an activity your child engages in, use it,” says Kenneth Wible, MD, Medical Director of the Pediatric Care Center and Section Chief, General Pediatrics at Children’s Mercy and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine. “Parents also need to model good behavior and make use of items such as seatbelts or helmets.”

In terms of what to expect if your child does fracture a bone, it varies widely. Some children experience considerable pain, while others feel none. The location and degree of a fracture can affect the level of the child’s discomfort, as well as the plan for setting the bone. Children who experience a femur fracture may face a longer road to recovery than children who break an arm.

If you suspect your child’s broken bone is compromising his circulation, or if it’s a compound fracture with bleeding, call 911 rather than traveling to the emergency room by car.

2. Blood Draws

At Children’s Mercy, physicians often use veins for blood draws rather than pricking a finger. Blood draws can be challenging for both parents and children if they aren’t expecting it.

“Parents need to be calm,” says Dr. Wible. “And it also helps for parents to discuss how we’re all working to keep the child healthy and to focus on the positive aspects of the encounter.”

You can also consider asking the clinician for a topical anesthetic to ease the pain of the needle stick for your child.

3. Getting Stitches

Some cuts and wounds require the attention of a nurse or doctor, who may dress the wound with either sutures or DERMABOND®—a glue made for wounds. If a wound is relatively small, DERMABOND® often can be used, but if there’s considerable bleeding, the wound will likely require sutures. When caring for the wound at home, the most important consideration is keeping the area dry and clean.

“The stitched wound won’t be watertight for at least 24 hours, so it’s important to keep the area covered and dry,” says Dr. Wible. “It can be a tough decision about whether to keep the child home from school or restrict his activity. It’s typically up to the parents to know whether they can trust their child to behave responsibly.”

4. Surgery

Children may need surgery for a wide variety of conditions and injuries that range from mild to serious.
Keeping Teeth in Tip-Top Shape

Despite all of your efforts to keep your child’s teeth clean, some children are simply more predisposed to dental problems than others.

Statistically, more than one in four children will have a cavity by the time he or she starts preschool, and approximately 50 percent of children will experience a cavity by third grade.

Even though a filling is mostly painless, it can still be a scary experience for children. To help keep your child calm, check with the office to see if you can accompany him during the procedure. It may also help to provide your child with an iPod® of her favorite music or a book.

Another common challenge is braces. While the actual application of braces doesn’t usually hurt, it’s not uncommon for the child to feel considerable achiness in the days following the appointment. It’s a good idea to have plenty of foods such as soup, jello and milkshakes on hand in case chewing is painful.

“In every situation, the very best thing is for the parent to get as much information as possible about what’s going to happen,” says Dr. Wible. “Then, the parent needs to use language the child can understand and do his or her best to prepare the child.”

If your child is scheduled to have surgery at Children’s Mercy, make sure to ask your physician about bringing your child to tour the hospital beforehand.

“The team members who handle the tours are excellent at what they do,” says Dr. Wible. “Children can simulate the surgery with teddy bears and get an idea of what the equipment looks like for their procedure.”

You can also visit www.childrensmercy.org/storybooktours to watch the Mercy Bear Story Book Tour slideshow with your child. These cartoon slides tell your child what to expect at the hospital in language she can understand.

5. Swallowing Pills

By the time your child is in early elementary school, it’s not unreasonable to expect her to be able to swallow medication.

“One tactic we use to help children swallow pills is starting them off with a familiar candy such as an M&M®,” says Dr. Wible. “Once they’ve practiced with that, they often don’t have anxiety about swallowing pills.”

Another strategy that’s beneficial with medication use as well as other health-related issues is giving children a choice.

“When possible, ask the child if she wants the liquid medication or the pill,” says Dr. Wible. “Children can learn from their choices, but it’s important for the parent to honor their decision once it’s offered.”

Do you have questions for a pediatrician about any of the milestones discussed in this article? If so, ask your child’s doctor, or visit www.childrensmercy.org/findadoctor for help finding the right pediatrician for your family.
Swim Safe This Summer

As temperatures rise, your child will more than likely want to keep cool at the local pool. While splashing around is a fun way to beat the heat, follow these tips to ensure your child stays safe this summer.

1. Enroll your child in swimming classes. A variety of organizations offer swimming lessons for little or no charge. However, even if your child is a skilled swimmer, it’s vital you supervise your child at all times.

2. Before your children jump in the pool, look to make sure the pool is equipped with anti-entrapment drain covers. Pool drains with broken or missing covers can trap your child, causing injuries or death.

3. If you have a pool at home, install a fence with self-closing gates and latches that are out of your child’s reach to keep your child from entering the pool unattended.

In Case of Emergency

If an accident occurs, it’s important you know how to respond. Always keep rescue equipment, such as a shepherd’s hook or life preserver, near the pool. Having a first aid kit is also a good idea in case your little one needs medical attention. Always carry a cell phone to the pool in case you need to call for medical help.

To learn more ways to keep your little swimmer safe this summer, visit www.childrensmercy.org/SafeAtHome.
Feed Your Little One for Less

With food prices on the rise there are ways to feed your child without taking a trip through the drive-through or spending a fortune. In fact, some of the healthiest foods can be purchased for less than $1.

- **Apples.** Apples are not only inexpensive but are a great option for kids, as they can be eaten on the go. They are also an excellent source of vitamin C.
- **Carrots.** Aside from being full of vitamins and minerals, carrots are easy to pack and make a great healthy snack when paired with fat-free ranch dressing.
- **Eggs.** Eggs are a great source of protein, can be prepared in a variety of ways and cost about a $1 per half dozen.
- **Oranges.** Oranges can be enjoyed on their own or make a wonderful addition to other healthy dishes, such as salads and parfaits. As an excellent source of vitamin C, oranges also aid in healing your little one’s bumps and bruises.
- **Yogurt.** Yogurt is a wonderful source of protein and calcium and can also be used for making smoothies, parfaits, dips and dressings.

Have You Found Us on Facebook?

Social networking sites such as Facebook™ and Twitter™ are becoming the latest rage, and many hospitals are joining the craze to keep patients and the community involved.

“Friending” or becoming a “fan” of a hospital is a great way to stay up to date on the latest health care news and events. Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics is part of the social media circuit and can be found on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube™.

- Children’s Mercy was the first hospital to *twitter* about pediatric plastic surgery, sending updates from the operating room. The hospital also recently allowed the parent of a Crohn’s disease patient the opportunity to provide Twitter updates via the hospital’s site during her daughter’s three-hour surgery.
- Children’s Mercy is available on *YouTube* and posts videos created by physicians and staff that serve as resources for parents about different topics, ranging from sleep apnea and asthma to proper handwashing etiquette and safety when playing outdoors in warm weather.
- On *Facebook*, Children’s Mercy posts links to news, hospital events and videos and provides a forum for you to share comments and make suggestions.
- **To follow Children’s Mercy on Facebook or Twitter, visit [www.childrensmercy.org](http://www.childrensmercy.org) and click on the Twitter and Facebook icons on the right-hand side of the page.**

Here’s where to find us!

**Children’s Mercy Hospital and Outpatient Center**
2401 Gillham Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64108
(816) 234-3000

**Children’s Mercy Northland**
501 N.W. Barry Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64155
(816) 413-2500

**Children’s Mercy South**
5808 W. 110th St.
Overland Park, KS 66211
(913) 696-8000

**Children’s Mercy Home Care Missouri**
2400 Pershing Rd., Garden Level
Kansas City, MO 64108
(816) 701-4300

**Kansas**
5520 College Blvd., Suite 365
Overland Park, KS 66211
(913) 696-8999

**Primary Care Clinics**
**Children’s Mercy West/ The Cordell Meeks Jr. Clinic**
4313 State Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66102
(913) 233-4400

**Pediatric Care Center**
Children’s Mercy Hospital Clinic and Research Bldg.
2nd Floor
2401 Gillham Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64108
(816) 234-3080

**Teen Clinic**
4605 Paseo Blvd., Suite 200
Kansas City, MO 64110
(816) 234-3050

The latest child health information can be delivered directly to your e-mail inbox each month through our **FREE** monthly e-newsletter, *Healthy Kids News*. To subscribe to this or other Children’s Mercy publications, including *Safe & Sound*, visit [www.childrensmercy.org](http://www.childrensmercy.org) and click on “Newsletters” today!
When Alex needs urgent care, Children’s Mercy is the only place I trust.”

– LeAnn C.

Our pediatric expertise doesn’t end at five o’clock.

When Alex ran a high fever on a Friday night, his family turned to Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics. With emergency services available downtown and urgent care services offered at Children’s Mercy South and Children’s Mercy Northland, our skilled doctors are here for you no matter when you need them.

There are a million reasons to choose Children’s Mercy. What’s yours?

Visit MillionReasons.org to share your story.