

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

Grandparents and other relatives are concerned about the following issues involving the health and safety of their grandchildren:

## **LOW COST MEDICAL INSURANCE.**

See Financial Issues section of this guide.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS (SHOTS)**

Children get “shots” (immunizations) against illnesses that are potentially fatal like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, polio, rubella and others. If you do not have a primary care physician and cannot afford the cost of immunizations, contact the Collier County Health Department, 732-2684. They can provide information on getting a shot for your child. The shots are free. Keep a vaccination health record to keep your child on schedule. This information will help you if you move to a new area or change health care providers, or when your child is enrolled in daycare or starts school. Remember to bring this record with you every time your child has a health care visit.

SEE THE CHART ENCLOSED.

## **NUTRITION AND FEEDING YOUR BABY.**

The Collier County Health Department’s **WIC Program** has information on infant and child nutrition, parenting, budgeting, food safety, handling information, general nutrition and guidance for infants through 5 year olds. You may be eligible to get assistance through this program. The telephone number for this program is (239)252-8208

## **IF YOUR GRANDCHILD IS SICK AND YOU DON’T KNOW WHERE HIS PARENTS ARE.**

It is not a good idea to give a child aspirin or any other medicine without knowing what is wrong. The best thing to do is to call the child’s doctor (if you know who this is) and follow his/her instructions. If you can’t do that call your doctor. As a last resort you can also call an emergency room but it is not the best choice, because it will take a long time to get help and it is very expensive.

## **IF YOUR OWN CHILD HAS BEEN TESTED POSITIVE FOR AIDS (HIV+). HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR GRANDCHILD HAS THE VIRUS?**

This is a very scary situation but not always disastrous. Not all children of HIV+ mothers will have the virus. For information about testing or other questions, you can contact the A.I.D.S. Hotline, 1-800-FLA-AIDS (1-800-352-2437) or Collier County Health Department, (239)252-8200.

## **LEAD POISONING**

Lead poisoning is one of the most preventive health hazards in young children. Lead poisoning is a disease caused by swallowing or inhaling lead. Even a small amount of lead can be dangerous to small children. The biggest source of lead in the home is lead-based paint used on walls, floors and radiators in some older homes. Your child(ren) can get lead poisoning when they eat paint chips or flakes and eat or breathe paint dust, by eating soil or dirt that has lead in it, by putting hands or toys that have lead dust on them in their mouths, by drinking water that has lead in it or any other way your child(ren) may swallow or inhale lead.

### **Signs of Lead poisoning:**

Some of the signs include: tiredness, headaches, weakness, weight loss, loss of appetite, vomiting, irritability, sleeplessness. Some children do not show signs of lead poisoning. If you live in an older home or if the child had been living in an older home, you may want to get them tested.

### **Poison Precautions**

Be sure that all medicines, even such things as aspirin and cough syrup, are out of sight and out of reach.

## **CHOKING PREVENTION AND FOOD SAFETY**

You should not give a child under three anything small and round such as grapes, popcorn or peanuts. Toys with small, removable parts are also tempting to a child to put in their mouth and can cause choking. Choose toys that are meant for small children. The child(ren) should never be allowed to eat uncooked hot dogs or undercooked hamburgers as they can have a bacteria that can make the child very ill. Leftover foods should always be refrigerated within two hours. Do not let your child(ren) lay down or walk when they are eating or drinking.

## **SLEEPING SAFETY**

Do not sleep with an infant or baby. It is very easy for an adult to roll while sleeping and suffocate the baby accidentally.

## **More Safety Tips & Resources**

The #1 health risk for children ages 14 and under isn't violence, drugs, or disease. It's unintentional injury. You can protect your family from needless tragedies by following these basic safety steps offered by the National Safe Kids Campaign (<http://www.safekids.org>).

- Use a safety seat until your child outgrows it (through age 4 and 40 pounds). When your child is 40 to 60 pounds, use a booster seat. Follow manufacturer's instructions carefully. When your child has outgrown the booster seat, always use a safety belt.
- Always wear a bike helmet properly when bicycling. A helmet should sit on top of your head in a level position and should not rock back and forth or slide to side. Always fasten the safety strap.
- Kids under 10 should never cross streets alone. Teach children to stop at the curb or edge of the road and to look left, right, and left again for traffic before and while crossing the street.
- Install four-sided, five-foot high fencing with a self-closing and self-latching gate around your pool or spa. Use personal flotation devices in open bodies of water. Drowning can happen in bathtubs, buckets, and toilet bowls in a matter of seconds.
- Install smoke detectors in all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Replace batteries yearly. Plan and practice two different escape routes.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from children. Water heaters should be set no higher than 120 degrees F. Test the water temperature before placing children in the bathtub. Consider installing anti-scald devices.
- Keep guns unloaded and locked out of children's reach. Lock and store bullets in a separate location.
- Install stairway safety gates and window guards on windows that are not fire emergency exits. Ensure that playgrounds have safe equipment and cushioned surfaces.
- Buy child-resistant packaging, but remember this does not mean "child-proof." Keep potentially poisonous substances and plants out of sight and reach of children.
- Post police and fire (911), poison control center (1-800-282-3171), and medical services telephone numbers near phones. Store Syrup of Ipecac with first aid supplies. Call Florida Poison Control Information Center Hotline (1-800-282-3171) if you think your child has eaten swallowed or inhaled any poison.