Health Tips For The New School Year

(StatePoint) As the new school year gears up and to-do lists get longer, make sure to put your child’s health on the list.

Updating vaccinations, scheduling annual physicals and alerting your child’s school about allergies and illnesses are crucial steps to ensure their academic success, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

“Children need to feel their best in order to learn, and schools need to be able to provide for students’ daily health issues as well as special needs, accidents and emergencies,” says O. Marion Burton, MD, of the AAP.

You can ensure a safe and happy year for both parent and child with a little planning.

Vaccinations

Thanks to immunizations, most children in the United States today lead much healthier lives than generations past. And while vaccines have reduced many infectious diseases to low levels in the United States, vacationers can bring old and new diseases back into the country. Measles, for example, is still prevalent in other parts of the world and has been linked to recent outbreaks in the U.S. Unvaccinated children are at risk.

That's why routine, up-to-date vaccinations are as important today as they have ever been. There may be tears, but the pain associated with most immunizations is minor. Consult your pediatrician about keeping your child’s vaccination schedule up to date.

Food Allergies and Illnesses

If your child suffers from food allergies or other health issues that require management during the school day, be sure to contact the school nurse and update your child’s health plan at school. This will ensure that proper steps are taken if the child develops symptoms while at school, and that his or her activities are not restricted unnecessarily.

A child’s health can change from year to year or even month to month, so make sure the school is well aware of how to handle new conditions or restrictions. Parents should also check that you have provided the school with any special medications your child needs.

Annual Physicals

Along with your child’s regular annual physical, aspiring athletes should get a sports physical before the start of the season. Children's bodies are vulnerable to injury, and as youngsters move through middle childhood -- becoming bigger, stronger, faster, and more aggressive -- the incidence of injuries rises.

Make sure your athlete wears a well-fitted helmet, mouthpiece, face guard, padding, eye gear, protective cup, or other equipment appropriate for the sport. Of course, regardless of whether your child is on a competitive team or not, parents should promote physical activity for all kids.

For more tips for a healthy school year, visit: www.healthychildren.org.

Discussing health issues with your pediatrician before the start of the year helps children, parents and school staff ensure students’ health and safety all year long.

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