# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD HEALTH & WELL BEING

9-12 YEARS

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Every child develops at their own pace—ask questions at their medical visit if concerned.
- Girls: May start developing breasts and having periods.
- **Boys:** May experience voice changes and hair growth, sometimes after age 12.
- Increased independence:
  - Children may communicate less with parents.
  - Friends may become more important than family.





concerned.

healthy habits develop.

 Keeping the kitchen free of junk food and sugary drinks.

WEIGHT AND NUTRITION

Weight may fluctuate — schedule a visit if

This is a key time when lifelong eating and

- Providing healthy snack options.
- Ask for professional guidance if needed.

**EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY** 

Encourage organized activities or help

computers) over physical activity, but that

Many prefer screens (phones, TVs,

doesn't mean it's good for them.

them find something they enjoy.

Count chores as activity.







## FACTS ABOUT THE MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS

- Many report experiencing bullying.
- Some may experiment with alcohol or smoking.
- Some may have boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Some may question their sexual identity.
- Interests may shift quickly.
- Schoolwork often becomes more challenging.
- Physical changes vary greatly.
- They may need help finding physical activities they enjoy.

# P P



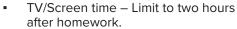


### **RULES & SETTING LIMITS**

Start family habits (e.g., family walks,

parking farther away, weekend hikes).

- Set clear expectations together—write down rules and consequences to reduce conflicts.
- Ideas for limits:
  - Chores Assign tasks and deadlines.
  - Cell phone No texting before homework, charge outside the bedroom at night, no rude or inappropriate messages.



 Staying home alone – No cooking, no friends over, check in regularly.





#### **BE AVAILABLE**

- Listen actively.
- Encourage self-expression.
- Show warmth and understanding.
- Set clear, consistent boundaries.



Contact us: (402) 734-4110 Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-784-8669

NE DHHS: (402) 471-3121

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988** 

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD HEALTH & WELL BEING

#### **HEALTHY EATING HABITS**

- Many often eat too much junk food.
- Avoid fights over food—instead, provide mostly healthy options at home.
- Family meals matter (doesn't have to be dinner—consider weekend breakfasts or a Friday movie night meal together).



## HOW TO START CONVERSATIONS

- Find one-on-one time to listen.
- Conversation starters:
  - What do you worry about the most?
  - What's your earliest memory?
  - What's one thing you were grateful for today?
  - What makes someone a good friend?



## POSITIVE PARENTING IDEAS

- Stay connected: It's easy to take their withdrawal personally, but they still need to feel loved and supported.
- Key phrases to use often:
  - "I love you."
  - "I'm proud of you."
  - "Try new things."
  - "Use me as an excuse."
  - "It will be okay."





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