



Kindergarten-Bound

How to Know When Your Child is Ready

The early years of a child's life are the most important when it comes to learning. After all, their little minds are processing at lightning speed. Typical guidelines say preschool is for children ages 3 to 5 and kindergarten is for children ages 5-6. But that doesn't mean the guidelines apply to every child.

So how will you know if your child is ready for kindergarten? Betty Barto-Smith and Doniese Wilcox, childlife educators at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center and the experts from www.education.com provide a breakdown of what a kindergartner should be able to do physically:

Motor Skills

- Perform large-motor skills, including running, jumping, leaping, sliding, and skipping
- Move in a variety of ways (straight, curved, zig zag, and circle)
- Catch a ball with two hands, and drop and catch a bounced ball
- Balance on one foot for a short period of time, and keep balance while transferring weight

Fitness

- Engage in one to two minutes of moderate to intense physical activities
- Possess strength to lift and support one's own body weight for a variety of activities (hopping, jumping, hanging)
- Perform between 3 and 8 push ups
- While lying on stomach, raise the chest at least 6 inches off the floor

Social Development

- Communicate cooperatively with peers
- Appropriately respond to feedback and use it to try to improve
- Frequently assist and encourage others
- Accept and respond appropriately to the decisions of the teacher, parent, or person in charge
- Contribute to a small group effort without being prompted
- Perform activities with appropriate self-control and follow the rules



Vision Screenings Integral Part of Health Care Routine

Vision problems affect between 5 and 10 percent of young children. That's why it's so important to have your child's vision screened regularly. Joseph Martin, Orthoptist with Avera Medical Group Ophthalmology says children with a history of prematurity, or those with a family history of pediatric eye disorders, eye misalignment, or lazy eye should have an eye exam around one year of age. "Those with a family history of pediatric glaucoma or tumors affecting the eye like retinoblastoma should consult their primary care physician for referral when the child is born," he recommends.

Although many vision related problems are caught through the screening process, Martin says parents should contact their primary care physician or pediatric eye specialist if their child displays any of the following signs or symptoms:

1. Complains of blurry vision with one or both eyes.
2. Complains of headache, blurry or double vision after 10-15 minutes of reading.
3. Chronically closes one eye, especially in bright light.
4. Has even intermittent misalignment of one eye.
5. Primarily assumes an abnormal head posture or head tilt.
6. Has chronic tearing, redness, light sensitivity, or complains of eye pain.



Vision Screening continued...

Martin says parents are children’s number one advocate for vision and overall health care. Even if your child has passed vision screens in the past, you should contact your eye care professional if you have any concerns or your child has chronic complaints. Early detection of eye disorders in children is crucial as they are most easily treated before 9 years of age.

Not Feeling 100%? Light Exercise Can Help!

Your head is stuffy. You can’t stop coughing. But yet you’re not sick enough to stay home. Should you work out? And if you do, should you push yourself or take it easy? Will exercise have no effect, or make you feel better or worse? Tara Mathison, a trainer at the Avera McKennan Fitness Center says exercise helps your immune system fight simple infections like colds and flu. “Regular exercise increases the efficiency of the immune system and helps to fight off bacteria that cause illnesses such as a cold,” she says.

Mathison lists some important things to remember:

- Listen to your body and not to over do it. As good as exercise is for the body and immune system, too vigorous of exercise can cause lightheadedness, difficulty breathing, and wheezing.
- Sometimes cold medications such as decongestants can increase your heart rate. In addition, your heart rate is increased with exercise. The combination of exercise and decongestants can cause your heart to pump very hard.
- You may become short of breath and have difficulty breathing. If you have a fever with a cold, exercise may stress your body even more. That’s why it’s important to wait a few days to get back to your regular exercise regimen.
- Working out too hard with a cold could stress your body, causing you to feel worse. This additional stress may hinder your recovery.

Finally, if you exercise with a cold and have any of the following symptoms, it’s important to stop and call your doctor:

- Increased chest congestion
- Difficulty catching your breath
- Coughing and/or wheezing
- Chest tightness or pressure
- Trouble breathing or excessive shortness of breath
- Light-headedness or dizziness
- Difficulty with balance

Note: Newsletter information should not replace direct medical advice from your doctor. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your family’s health care provider.

Top 5 Heart-Healthy Foods

February is heart month and nothing matters more than taking good care of your heart. Starting at an early age, it’s important to get regular exercise and eat a variety of nutritious, heart-healthy foods that make up a healthy diet. Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center’s HyVee registered dietitians recommend including these five “superfoods” to boost nutritional goodness while eating your way to a healthier heart.

1. Blueberries

Blueberries top the list as one of the most powerful disease-fighting foods. These delicious jewels are packed with fiber, vitamin C, and are available all year long. **Recipe idea:** Make an irresistible trifle by layering lady fingers, light whipped topping or low-fat pudding, and blueberries. Or puree a batch of berries for a breakfast or dessert sauce.

2. Salmon

This cold-water fish is a great source of protein and is also packed with heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. The American Heart Association advises eating salmon and other omega-3 rich foods twice a week for benefits that go beyond heart health. **Recipe idea:** Marinate salmon in a lime, onion, garlic, and soy mixture for 15 minutes before grilling for a delicious fish taco or grilled fish sandwich.

3. Soy Protein

This inexpensive, high-quality protein contains fiber, vitamins, and minerals – all the ingredients for a heart-healthy meal. **Recipe idea:** Soy milk is not just for the lactose-intolerant. Make a nutritious beverage with chocolate soy milk, a banana, and some ice for a delicious smoothie.

4. Oatmeal

Grandma called it roughage and we need plenty of it each day. Oatmeal is one way to get it. Oats are nourishing whole grains and a great source of vitamins, minerals, and cholesterol-lowering fiber. Research shows oats lower cholesterol levels, keep you regular, and may help prevent certain cancers. **Recipe idea:** Make your own crunchy granola by baking three cups of oats at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. Stir occasionally, then cool and mix in a variety of chopped dried fruit, nuts, and seeds.

5. Spinach

Popeye knew firsthand the value of eating spinach. Hands down, spinach is the powerhouse of the vegetable kingdom. Its rich, dark color comes from the multiple phytochemicals, vitamins, and minerals (especially folate and iron) that also fight disease, protect against heart disease, and preserve your eyesight. **Recipe idea:** Mix spinach with pine nuts and raisins, then stuff into winter squash and bake for a colorful, delicious main or side dish.

Health Events & Programs

Let’s Talk for Girls

February 2 & 9 • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Education Center Classroom 3 • Cost: \$25

Information on the changes of puberty for girls 10-13 and their parents.

Super Sitter Babysitting Class

Saturday, March 3 • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Education Center Classroom 2 • Cost: \$30

All classes held at the Avera Education Center located at 810 East 23rd Street, on the Avera Campus. To register, call 1-877-AT-AVERA (1-877-282-8372) or register online at www.AveraMcKennon.org.

Find out your risk for certain types of health issues. Confidential, online assessments available for lung cancer, colon cancer, diabetes, stress, and many more. Go to www.AveraMcKennon.org to learn more.