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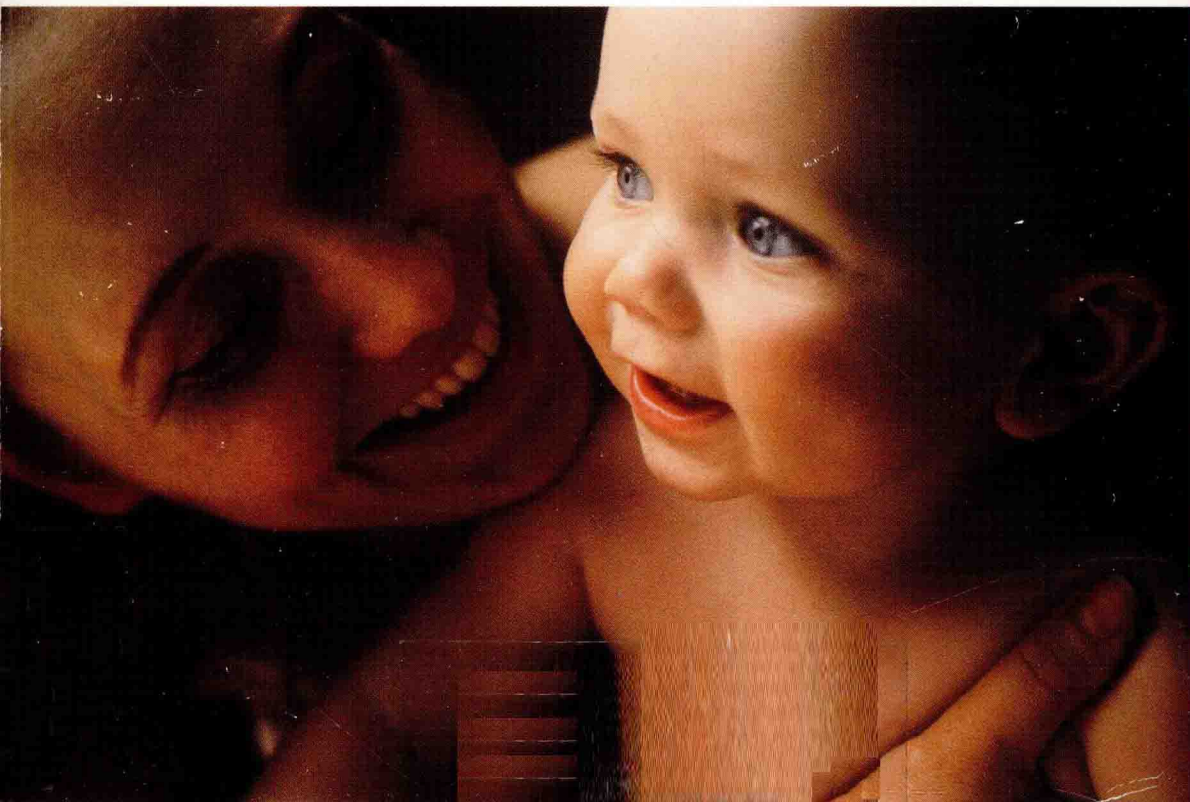
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THE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

"This is the medical 'instruction manual' that should come with all new babies when they are born."

—COLLEEN M. RYAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.



Birth to Age Five

FOREWORD BY COLLEEN M. RYAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

The Quick Reference Guide to Your Child's Health

Birth to Age Five

Alia Y. Antoon, M.D.
and
Denise M. Tompkins, R.N.

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Dedication

To my sons, Austin and Brendan, for giving me greater dimension and knowledge about the care of children.

—ALIA Y. ANTOON, M.D.

I would like to dedicate this book to my three children, Megan, Ryan, and Cate, who have taught me volumes about child care, and to my husband Ron for his unending support, understanding, and encouragement throughout this project. I would also like to thank the staff of the Boston Shriners Burns Institute from 1975 to 1992 for everything that they taught me about the care of sick children, and the staff at the Boston Children's School and The Learning Project Elementary School, for everything they taught me about normal children's behaviors. I'd also like to thank Dr. Antoon for being a great pediatrician for my three children and teaching me to always trust my instincts as a mother who truly can tell when my children need health care.

—DENISE M. TOMPKINS, R.N.

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Foreword

Neither academic degrees nor business success can prepare one for being a parent; you only come to realize this the first night that your child is sick. My husband and I are parents of two-year-old Katie and ten-month-old Michael, and many times during these past two years we've relied upon Alia and Denise, longtime colleagues and friends. Alia Antoon, M.D., is an outstanding Harvard pediatrician who is well known and respected for her commonsense approach to pediatric medical problems and child rearing. Denise Tompkins, R.N., is a highly experienced pediatric nurse who lectures worldwide on pediatric nursing issues and injury prevention. Both are working "supermoms" with lovely, healthy, well-adjusted children to prove it.

A *Quick Reference Guide to Your Child's Health: Birth to Age Five* will help you sort out your children's medical needs and start them on the road to recovery. This book is rich with practical information that is just not found as readily anywhere else. There is basic advice commonly given to parents by pediatricians during regular well-baby visits, as well as information on newborn care, nutrition, behavior, and development. Most important, the book addresses the kinds of questions that go through your mind when you are pacing back and forth in the middle of the night with a crying baby (or two) in your arms. How can I make this poor child more comfortable? Should I take his temperature, and which thermometer should I use? How serious is a "serious" fever? Should I call the doctor right now or can it wait until morning? Should we rush to the hospital? What happens if she goes into seizure? What is this rash? And what exactly was that hand, foot, and mouth disease I heard the neighborhood kids had? Should I line up alternative child care for tomorrow, or phone the office and cancel my appointments now? "Honey, get out that book and look up fever again, would you?!"

Alia and Denise have provided a tremendous service to today's busy parents by giving us answers that are clear, concise, and readily understood. This is the medical "instruction manual" that should come with all new babies when they are born. It should be required reading for concerned parents, nannies, and others responsible for the care of small children.

—COLLEEN M. RYAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School;
Associate Surgeon, Massachusetts General Hospital,
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CHAPTER ONE

Fundamentals of Child Health



INTRODUCTION

Parents provide a basic framework for making certain their child is as healthy as possible. This includes a well-balanced diet, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, a safe environment, and regular medical checkups. Your child's health care needs, growth pattern, and developmental milestones are intimately connected. Your job is to provide the structure and environment to enable a healthy child to flourish. When your child does get sick, you can often help him feel better by being on top of the problem and treating his symptoms with the help of your child's doctor. This book will give you:

- practical advice about how to handle common childhood symptoms, injuries, and illnesses.
- fundamental information about caring for a newborn baby.
- basic information about healthy children and how to tell when they are sick.
- what to do in an emergency.
- an overview of developmental and behavioral issues.

CHOOSING A DOCTOR FOR YOUR CHILD

Your first task is to set up a system of primary health care for your child. Primary health care involves treating and preventing common health problems through routine checkups. These visits will give you an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and any matters of concern. Regular checkups will ensure that minor problems are noticed before they become serious problems. There are many choices for obtaining primary health care and a primary health care provider for your child.

In general, a good way to choose a primary health care provider for your child is to talk to friends, neighbors, and relatives to gather recommendations. Your personal

doctor or clinic may also give you a recommendation. “M.D.” stands for medical doctor and means that a doctor has graduated from an accredited medical school and has registered with the state board of medicine. A pediatrician is a doctor who has specialized in the care of children and has taken further training to be certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. Family physicians or general practitioners (GP’s) are also qualified to care for children, and some people prefer that the same doctor take care of the whole family. You can call your state medical society to research a doctor’s credentials or look them up in your local library in the *American Medical Directory* or the *Directory of Medical Specialists*. Many hospitals also offer a referral list of doctors that are affiliated with their hospital.

The primary places where you can get a regular checkup (primary health care) for your child include: a private medical practice, a neighborhood or community health clinic, a public health clinic, or a health maintenance organization (HMO). Opting for a private medical practice means that you choose a doctor and go to her office for checkups, immunizations, and routine laboratory tests. This physician usually works with an office nurse or pediatric nurse practitioner. He may work by himself or in a group practice that lets other doctors in the same group rotate coverage for sick children when the office is closed.

Neighborhood and community health clinics are often available in cities and are usually associated with a hospital. They are often called well-baby clinics and are staffed by primary health care teams that include doctors, nurses, and other health professionals. You may not always see the same person when you bring your child to the clinic, but all the members of the health care team will work together to benefit your child’s health care. These clinics are usually open for long hours during the day and early evening but usually are not available for twenty-four-hour coverage. Public health clinics are similar to neighborhood and community health clinics except that their hours and services are usually more limited. They are often found in cities and rural areas and provide select free health care services for children. Check with the public health department in your city or county to determine what is available in your area.

HMO’s are prepaid medical insurance plans that provide a variety of health care services through their own clinics and doctors. They have a lot of rules governing how you access health care, and you have to follow their protocols. With many HMO’s it is

Ways to Obtain Primary Health Care

- Private medical practice with a pediatrician or family practitioner
- Neighborhood or community health center or clinic
- Public health clinic
- Health maintenance organization (HMO)

very important that you become a vocal advocate for your child. Always be prepared with all the information you can gather about your child's problems so that you can articulate your child's needs. Always read your health care plan carefully and ask a lot of questions to learn exactly how it operates.

When choosing your child's health provider care it is also important to consider the practical aspects. These may include:

- Is the office or clinic conveniently located? Is it near public transportation? Does it have parking?
- Are the hours suited to your family's schedule? Are night or weekend hours important to you, and are they available?
- What happens when the office or clinic is closed? How do you access medical care after hours?
- Is it hard to get an appointment? How long do you have to wait?
- What are the fees?

Before making a final choice regarding regular health care for your child, you should schedule an appointment and talk with the doctor or key person in the clinic or health care service. You want to be sure you can easily ask questions and that you and your family are comfortable with both the doctor and his group practice or clinic. Once you have chosen a primary health care provider for your child, you can work on a long and trusting relationship to help keep your child as happy and healthy as possible.

GUIDE TO WELL-BABY/CHILD CHECKUPS

Babies and young children spend a lot of time having routine well-baby checkups as well as calls and visits for illness. Before your baby is discharged from the hospital, he will receive the first of many complete physical exams. This is done either by your pediatrician or one employed by the hospital. At that time your baby will also receive his first immunization, the hepatitis-B shot. The schedule of future checkups for routine well-baby care will center around your baby's growth, developmental needs, and immunization schedule.

Because you know your child better than anyone else, your involvement in his health care is critical. It's your job to speak up for your child, ask questions about anything you don't understand, or voice any concerns you may have. It may be helpful to go to each checkup with a list of questions in hand.

Every time you take your child for a well-baby checkup, he will be measured for length, head circumference, and weight. These growth parameters give your baby's doctor a good idea of how he is progressing. The exact numbers are not important. Your

doctor is looking at the trend of your baby's overall growth pattern. Many times your doctor will chart your baby's weight, length, and head circumference on a special growth chart. These forms have normal growth patterns for children at different ages. A sample of this growth chart is contained in Appendix B.

Your doctor will also look at your child's skin, listen to her heart and lungs, look in her ears, palpate her abdomen, and check her reflexes. He will also discuss diet and nutrition as well as check on what new things your child has learned to do, such as rolling over, sitting up, crawling, and so on. During her first five years, your child is changing rapidly, and each change builds upon previous ones. Your child's health care provider will be monitoring your child's trends in these areas and discovering what the normal pattern for your child will be. Each physical exam adds to the baseline data of what is normal and healthy for your child. Charts and tables for normal patterns are only guidelines, so remember that your doctor will work with you to develop specific guidelines and expectations for your unique and wonderful child.

Developmental milestones, another measure of continued learning in the areas of motor activities, language development, and intellectual and emotional skills, are discussed in chapter 7.

Immunizations

Another key element for keeping your child healthy is to keep her immunizations up to date. The purpose of immunizations is to protect individuals and communities from the most severe infectious diseases. An immunization works by introducing a very mild form of the infection to a person through a vaccine so that the body can develop immunity without actually contracting the disease. Modern immunizations and vaccinations have brought infectious diseases such as polio, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella under control. (See appendix C, Routine Immunization Schedule.) In fact, smallpox (once the cause of many childhood deaths) has

Basic Health Exam for Infants and Young Children

- Weight, length, and head circumference measurements
- Immunization update as needed
- Skin assessment
- Heart and lung auscultation
- Ear and throat check
- Abdominal exam
- Reflex check
- Developmental assessment for motor skills, language development, and intellectual skills

Table 1.1

Guidelines For Well-Baby/Child Checkups	
Age	Procedures for Checkup
Newborn	Physical exam including developmental assessment and hearing screen. Baseline measurement for length, weight, and head circumference. Review umbilical cord care/hygiene and circumcision care if applicable. Infant car seat needed for transport home. Report any fevers immediately. Immunization: Hepatitis-B (1).
1 month	Physical exam including developmental assessment and hearing screen. Growth assessment with length, weight, and head circumference. Report any fevers immediately. Feeding reviewed. Immunization: Hepatitis-B (2).
2 months	Physical exam including developmental assessment and hearing screen. Growth assessment with length, weight, and head circumference. Discuss need for vitamins, iron, and fluoride supplements. Check visual and hearing acuity. Immunizations: DPT (1), Polio (1), Hib (1).
4 months	Physical exam including developmental assessment and hearing screen. Growth assessment with length, weight, and head circumference. Discuss contagious disease if in a day care setting. Between four to six months, introduce baby cereal. Immunizations: DPT (2), Polio (2), Hib (2).
6 months	Physical exam including developmental assessment and hearing screen. Growth assessment with length, weight, and head circumference. Discuss baby cereal and baby food. Introduce only one new food at a time to note allergy or intolerance. Review teething. Deciduous teeth start at six months. Start using toothbrush. Immunizations: Hepatitis-B (3), DPT (3), Polio (3), Hib (3).