

The Importance of Pediatric Wellness Visits: What You Should Know

By Dr. Elizabeth Harris, BayCare Medical Group

Taking your child to the doctor is crucial when they are sick, but many people don't realize that wellness visits and checkups are just as important throughout a child's development and into their young adult life. These regular wellness visits allow your child's pediatrician to evaluate their physical, emotional, social wellbeing, as well as prevent any developing health problems or concerns. Wellness visits will keep you and your child on track for essential immunizations as well.

It's helpful to have a list of questions and concerns ready before your visit so that you are not likely to forget any significant issues. These visits will also help your doctor better understand your child's milestone development. For small children before the age of five, milestones can be a valuable predictor of how well your child is developing. Some of these include things such as copying facial expressions, smiling, crawling, walking, understanding, communication, and dressing.

If your child is behind on specific issues, it might just be a delayed milestone for various reasons, but on the other hand, it could be something that needs to be further evaluated, addressed, and possibly treated with therapy or other at-home recommendations.

For teens and young adults, it's important for them to maintain a regular relationship with their pediatrician as they get older. These years are just as critical as when they were younger and in many cases, psychological distress due to their peers is an issue that can affect their health in multiple ways. This is a time when teens are going through numerous changes in their lives while adapting and transitioning into adulthood.

If appropriate, their pediatrician will usually set aside time to see them in private for a more in-depth conversation, which gives the teen the ability to ask questions that they may not want to discuss in front of their parents.



Pediatric Services at BayCare BayCare Kids— Health Care that is Exclusively for Kids

BayCare Kids is committed to keeping children healthy throughout childhood so that they can become healthy adults. And we've dedicated an entire network to the unique medical needs of kids - we offer a continuum of care for children that starts before birth and continues through early adulthood.

Patients have access to extensive services at multiple hospitals and outpatient specialty centers, a mobile medical clinic, and other community-based resources, plus a variety of pediatricians and physician specialists. Throughout our network, you'll find highly trained care teams that specialize in pediatric care as well as the emotional and mental development of children.

St. Joseph's Children's Hospital is our flagship hospital in Tampa, Florida, and offers comprehensive services exclusively for kids. Our pediatric services are located throughout Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties in Florida, and we provide pediatric care for the southeastern United States.

We encourage parents and families to participate in their child's care plan. A variety of educational and support resources are available for parents, caregivers and our communities. BayCare Kids provides the best possible care for children to help them have a healthy future.

To find out more about our pediatric care services, please contact us at (813) 548-7860. To find out more, please visit [BMGKids.org](https://www.BMGKids.org).



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Elizabeth Harris is a caring and dedicated pediatrician caring for the Tampa, Florida community. Dr. Harris attended the University of South Florida, where she earned her degree in medicine. Dr. Harris

is a part of BayCare Medical Group. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. Dr. Harris is sensitive to the uniqueness of each patient's situation and adapts her consultations and treatment options appropriately to accommodate individual needs and concerns. She exhibits her passion for pediatrics in the care and precision she takes with her patients.