



Well-child Visits vs. Sport Physicals



Children go through many changes as they grow. They also need a variety of health checkups and appointments as they age. Two such appointments you may hear about are well-child visits and sport physicals. These two checkups may sound similar, but they have important differences that parents need to know.

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SH-17231 | FC-06022017-M-3

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Well-child visit versus sport physical

A well-child visit and a sport physical are not the same thing.

- Well-child visits are recommended for your child each year. They include a complete physical, and will review your child’s height, weight, immunizations, health history, and more.
- A sport physical may be requested by your child’s school or sports team. This only means clearing a child to play sports. It does not include a complete review of your child’s health.

The good news is that you do not need both a well-child visit and a sport physical. Your child’s annual well visit covers everything he or she needs for a sport physical. A sports physical does not cover everything in a well-child visit. Only a well-child visit will let you take care of both at once.

Benefits of a well-child visit

In addition to covering all of the requirements of a sport physical, a well-child visit is an opportunity to talk to the primary care provider (PCP) about your child’s health. These checkups also can catch health problems early and prevent them from getting worse.

Well-child visits cover a lot of important health information. Make sure to talk to the PCP about these items:

- Overall health and development.
- Body mass index (BMI) percentile.
- Immunizations.
- Current medicines.
- Counseling for nutrition.
- Counseling for physical activity.
- Chlamydia screening urine test (16 and older).
- Depression.
- Tobacco and alcohol use.

Screenings and counseling are not available at a sport physical. Your child must go to a well visit for this information.

Immunizations

Keep on track for back-to-school shots. Your child’s school may require these shots before he or she can attend. Check with your PCP to see if any shots are needed to bring your child up-to-date.

4 – 6 years old

DTaP	MMR
Polio	Varicella

Teens

Human papillomavirus (HPV)
Two shots:
Second shot should be given six – 12 months after the first shot

Meningococcal conjugate (MCV4)
✓ 1st shot at 11 – 12 years old
✓ Booster at age 16

Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)

Medication

Getting a yearly well-child visit helps form a strong relationship with your PCP. The PCP will be able to appropriately refill medication because the PCP will know your child’s health history.

Sick visits

A sick visit is an office visit for an acute illness, such as a cold or flu, aches and pains, or a minor injury. It could also be for the flare-up of a chronic illness.

If your child has visited the doctor with an illness this year, that does not mean your child has had an annual checkup. The two types of visits are not the same. Your child will still need a well-child visit.

No out-of-pocket cost

Well-child visits are a benefit of being a First Choice member and are free of charge to you. If your child has not visited his or her PCP, call today to make an appointment. The PCP is listed on the First Choice ID card.

If you would like your child to see a different doctor or if you would like to change PCPs, please call Member Services.

Everyone six months and older should have a flu shot each year.

