



Esse Health e-Newsletter Article

## When to Call Your Pediatrician

By Dr. Randall S. Sterkel, Pediatrician, Esse Health

The pediatricians of Esse Health are committed to your child's health. If you have concerns or questions about your child's health, we welcome your telephone calls. This article will serve as a helpful guide in determining when and how to contact us.

### When to Call 911

If you are ever afraid that your child may have a life-threatening emergency, **call 911 immediately**. Some examples of 911 symptoms include if your child is not breathing, is unconscious, is bleeding severely or is having a seizure.

### When to Call Poison Control

If your child may have eaten or drunk something poisonous, call the poison control hotline immediately at **1-800-222-1222**. If you are not sure whether or not to call poison control, call us; we can help you decide.

### When to Call After Hours

If you believe your child has an emergency or urgent concern that cannot wait until the office is open, call us immediately. Some examples of symptoms to prompt After-Hour Calls include:

- Trouble Breathing
- Severe Pain
- Bad Head or Neck Injury
- Stiff Neck
- Prolonged/Inconsolable Crying
- Sick Newborn Babies (Babies under 3 months old are at higher risk when they are sick. If your baby has a fever or is acting sick – call us right away.)
- Severe Vomiting or Diarrhea/Dehydration
- Confused/Unresponsive
- Not using an Arm or Leg
- Eye Injury

This is not a complete list. You know your child best. If you are worried that your child has any

problem that can't wait until the office is open – call us.

The pediatricians at Esse Health use the Saint Louis Children's Hospital Call Center as our after-hours emergency exchange. If you call after hours, you will speak with an experienced pediatric telephone triage nurse who can listen to your concerns, ask further questions and help decide what to do next. An Esse Health pediatrician is always on call for your child. We work closely with the call center nurses after hours. We also receive reports from the call center every time you call that include the reason for your call and the advice you received.

### When to Call the Office

In addition to calling us in order to schedule appointments and refill medications, we encourage you to call our office with non-emergent questions and concerns about your child. If a question or concern can wait until the office is open, we prefer to help you then. Examples of symptoms to prompt Office Calls include:

- Rashes
- Head Lice
- Earaches
- Fever for 3 days or more
- Colds for 10 days or more
- Illness getting worse
- Illness not getting better

This list is also not complete. If you are not sure whether or not we should see your child in the office – please call. We are also happy to discuss questions about your child's eating, sleeping and development.

When you call us, we will ask about your child's age and any chronic disease he or she may have. It is also helpful to know any medications your child is taking and any allergies he or she may have. Please make sure we answer all of your questions.

Please tell us if you do not understand any advice we give you. Most importantly, please tell us if you are not comfortable and reassured at the end of any call. Again, you are the parent – you know your child best.

### **St. Louis Children’s Hospital Kid Care App**

We always want you to have the best information possible about your child’s health. Our Esse Health Website has a link to Kid Care – a symptom-based care guide for children. Kid care is designed to help parents make smart decisions on what level of care, if any, is needed for their child and how to provide speedy symptom relief for minor illnesses and injuries. This application can be downloaded for free to your computer or iPhone. It has great information to help you if your child is sick.

To get the Kid Care App:

- 1) Go to [Essehealth.com](http://Essehealth.com)
- 2) Click on Resource Center
- 3) Click on Social Media and Apps
- 4) Click on Kid Care

At Esse Health, we want your child well. Please call us if you need us – we are here to help.

Dr. Randy Sterkel is a pediatrician at the Esse Health Creve Coeur Pediatrics office. He is also the medical director of the Saint Louis Children’s Hospital Pediatric Call Center, a member of the executive committee for the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Telephone Care and an official reviewer of Kid Care.

[www.essehealth.com](http://www.essehealth.com)