

FAMILY TIME // Health & Wellness

Questions and answers: Kids and sunglasses, having another baby and Pap tests

Kids think they look cool, but sunglasses protect your child's eyes from UV rays!



ASK THE EXPERT
Compiled by Chris Worthy

Upstate Parent is getting answers to those health questions you've always wanted to ask. You ask us, and we ask local physicians and other experts to weigh in with some answers.

Have a burning question? Let us know! This month's questions are answered by several local experts. Remember that these answers are the opinions of these specific experts and not intended as medical advice. Always consult your personal doctor about your health.

Q Does my child really need to wear sunglasses?

A Yes! Sunglasses with lenses that screen out 99 – 100 percent of UV rays are the single most important thing a parent can do to protect their child's sensitive eyes from the sun's radiation. Evidence shows that we get 25 – 50 percent of our lifetime exposure to dangerous UV rays by the time we are 18. Make sure the glasses you pick say they block 99 – 100 percent of UV rays. Also, get sunglasses with impact-resistant, polycarbonate lenses. These will be less likely to break during active sports. If your child already wears glasses, get her sports glasses to wear to play outside. I worry about kids who wear glasses every day and then wear those glasses on the basketball court or playing field. They just aren't built for that.

— *Dr. Kara Jo Dodgens, optometrist
Clemson Eye*

Q Exactly how often should I get a Pap test? It seems like the recommendations keep changing.

A The Pap smear is a wonderful example of how screening has saved lives. Over the past 30 years, mortality from cervical cancer in the United States has dropped by more than 50 percent. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that Pap testing begin at age 21

regardless of sexual activity, that ages 21 – 29 have a test every three years and ages 30 – 65 have either a Pap every three years or Pap with HPV co-testing every five years. It is important to talk with your physician to devise a screening regimen that is right for you. Even though a Pap test may be performed less frequently, an annual examination is still very important. Your gynecologist will perform a health and risk assessment and if indicated, a clinical breast exam and pelvic examination, which are crucial for detecting breast and pelvic masses as early as possible.

— *Dr. James F. Metherell
Highlands Center for Women*

Q We want to have another baby but not yet. At what age should I begin to make it a priority so the risks to me and to the baby remain low?

A Research has shown that pregnancies in women over age 35 carry a higher risk of preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, preterm delivery and small-for-gestational

age infants although there is no evidence that age greater than 35 is an independent risk factor for these complications. The risk increases with obesity, hypertension and habits such as smoking. The risk of having a fetus with certain chromosomal abnormalities such as trisomy 21 increases over age 35 and there is testing that can be done in the first trimester for this when applicable. Also, there is an increased risk of having a pregnancy complicated by multiple gestations as age increases compared to younger women.

Fertility begins to decline starting at age 30 – 32. It declines sharply after age 40.

— *Dr. Celeste Beaudoin
Elle OB-GYN*

Ask a question!

Email chris@worthyplace.com and you might see your question answered in print.

