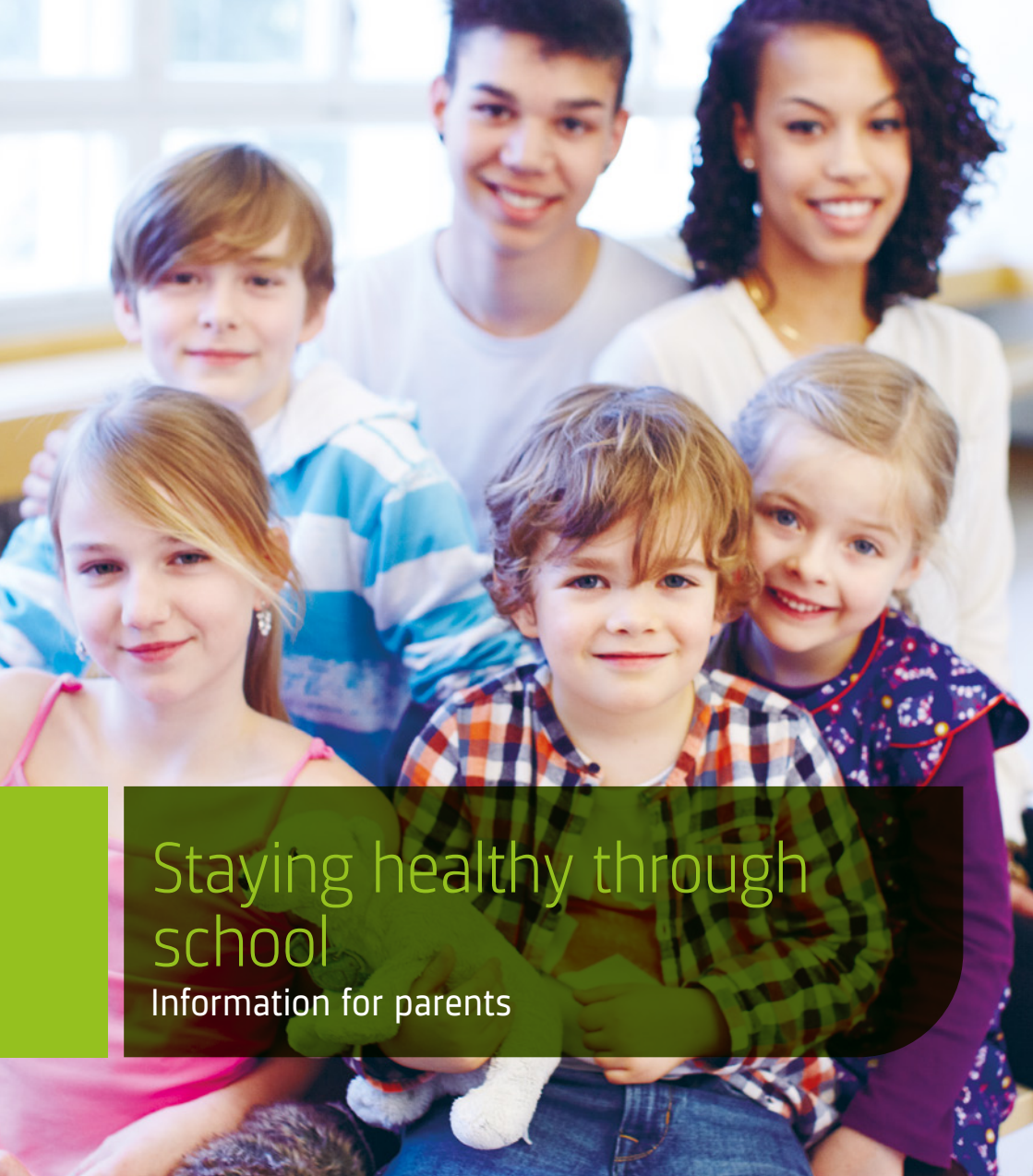




Gesundheitsdepartement des Kantons Basel-Stadt

**Medizinische Dienste**

► **Schulärztlicher Dienst**



Staying healthy through  
school

Information for parents

# Dear parents

The health of children and young people is something that we all care a great deal about. The Schulärztlicher Dienst Basel-Stadt is dedicated to ensuring that children and young people grow up healthily.



Dr. med.  
**Markus Ledergerber**, MPH  
Leiter Schulärztlicher Dienst

As soon as children enter kindergarten, the structure of their day changes. They spend a great deal of time at kindergarten and later, at school. For teachers and supervisors, the health of children and young people in the school environment is very important. Subjects such as a healthy diet, exercise, well-being, etc. are discussed in class and are part of everyday school life.

If children and young people have health problems, this can have implications for their attendance at school and affect their well-being and ability to learn. Early recognition of such problems, a thorough investigation accompanied by the taking of appropriate measures and good specialist follow-up are very important and all part of the role of the Schulärztlicher Dienst of the Gesundheitsdepartement Basel-Stadt (Basel-City Health Department).

Throughout a child's school career, from kindergarten until they leave school, the Schulärztlicher Dienst is an important link between the child, their parents, the school and GPs on health matters. School doctors are very familiar with what happens in schools. They are there for you, the parents, as a point of contact and source of advice, and will help you to maintain and improve your children's health.

In this brochure, we introduce you to the various school-medical services, from check-ups to vaccinations and where you can obtain advice. At the same time, you will find lots of useful information and tips about how you can improve your children's health.

















We hope that, for you and your children, their time at kindergarten and school is as untroubled, unworried and above all healthy as possible.

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# Schulärztlicher Dienst Basel-Stadt

The work of school doctors

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The main tasks carried out for the Schulärztlicher Dienst by school doctors are preventive health care, health protection and health promotion among children and young people. School doctors advise and support parents, children, young people and teachers on all aspects of health and development that are relevant in school.

## School doctors

School doctors work in the interests of the health of children and young people, and they target the entire population of young people. Every kindergarten and every school in Basel-Stadt has a school doctor assigned to them. Because they are close to the school and have many years of experience, they are very familiar with what happens in schools and are able to observe the well-being and health of children and young people at first hand in the school environment. They also play an important role in the school's health promotion work. In this sense, they are the "occupational health doctors" for schools.

Health concerns us all. Maintaining and promoting the health of schoolchildren is a shared responsibility. School doctors form an important link between the child, their parents, the school, GPs and other professionals. In addition to their extensive expertise in paediatric medicine and child development, they are also specialists in public health. They are experienced in project work and they work closely with other official bodies. Check-ups by school doctors however do not replace the preventive check-ups carried out by paediatricians at regular intervals. It is important that your child is seen and attended by a paediatrician or private doctor and has regular paediatric medical check-ups.

The work of a school doctor always focuses on children and young people as individuals. Whether it is a check-up at a kindergarten, a follow-up vaccination at school or a chat during a consultation session for young people – the health of the children and young people is always the top priority.

## The work of school doctors is to provide a comprehensive package of services for preventive care and health promotion in schools

Each individual school-medical service is part of a cohesive and comprehensive package of services in the field of preventive care and health promotion in schools and can be compared with a modern occupational health service at a large company. In this sense, school doctors are the occupational health experts for schools.

For example, while carrying out check-ups, school doctors can also advise the class teachers on questions concerning any health problems children might have that are relevant to the school. They can tell them in person about the various health promotion services such as class-room exhibitions, teaching materials, etc. and the guidelines for dealing with communicable diseases. This combination of different aspects is typical of a school doctor's work.

The Schulärztlicher Dienst ensures equal opportunities for all children and young people and uncomplicated, low-threshold access to its services. All school-medical services are free of charge.

#### The work of a school doctor includes the following main elements:

- ▶ Check-ups
- ▶ Explanations and advice
- ▶ Health protection
- ▶ Vaccinations
- ▶ Health promotion
- ▶ Health monitoring

#### Explanations and advice to help children, young people, parents and schools

School doctors are very familiar with the school system and the everyday life of children and young people in the school environment. Schoolchildren, parents and teachers can all turn to the Schulärztlicher Dienst on matters concerning health and school. School doctors can, where necessary, act as an intermediary between parents and children, schools and GPs and they work closely with other institutions.

#### Check-ups by school doctors in the interests of health and well-being

The purpose of check-ups by school doctors is to identify any health abnormalities or risks as early as possible, so as to be able to take the necessary measures. Thanks to the all-embracing access to this service through school, all children have the opportunity to be checked by a school doctor. School doctors do not treat children but refer them, where necessary, to general practitioners or other professionals.

#### Preventing the spread of communicable diseases

In the case of an outbreak of certain infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, meningitis, measles, etc. the Schulärztlicher Dienst takes the necessary steps to prevent further spread. School doctors can provide information on the measures that are required when it comes to communicable diseases, such as informing parents or excluding pupils from school.

You can find more information at [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits)

#### Protection by immunisation

Preventing communicable diseases is one of the key tasks of the Schulärztlicher Dienst. School doctors have the opportunity to provide advice and carry out vaccinations during check-ups, the immunisation campaign in the first year of secondary school and individual vaccination sessions. Vaccinations by school doctors can make up for any that schoolchildren may have missed.

#### Health promotion in school

The health promotion services for schools include teaching materials, classroom sessions and exhibitions on various health-related subjects such as diet, exercise, sexuality, addiction, etc. Our own youth magazines provide information that is specifically aimed at young people and relevant to their age. School doctors are actively engaged in the cantonal School Network 21 – the network of health-promoting and sustainable schools.

#### Analysis of the health situation among children and young people

In order that the health situation among children and young people can be assessed and any problematic trends in their health identified, health-related data is regularly collected, analysed and documented. The results are published in health reports and feed into the planning and implementation of projects to do with health promotion and preventive care. Most of the health data comes from the check-ups carried out by school doctors and this allows very reliable statements about the health of children and young people in the canton to be made.

## Schulärztlicher Dienst Basel-Stadt

The Schulärztlicher Dienst falls under the Medizinische Dienste department in the Gesundheitsdepartement Basel-Stadt. The Schulärztlicher Dienst works in close partnership with the two Prävention and Übertragbare Krankheiten offices, especially in the field of health promotion in schools and infectious diseases.

Not only school doctors but also medical practice assistants and an orthoptist work in the Schulärztlicher Dienst.





## Check-ups by school doctors

Kindergarten / primary school / secondary school



Check-ups by school doctors are early-identification programmes to prevent illness. They are carried out in the interests of the health and well-being of children and young people.

### Check-ups by school doctors in the interest of healthy child development

In schools in the canton of Basel-Stadt, the Schulärztlicher Dienst arranges for check-ups to be carried out by school doctors in kindergartens, in Year 4 of primary school and in the third year of secondary school. The aim of these check-ups is to identify any abnormalities in a child's health development at an early stage and set the appropriate measures in motion. For example, it is important to identify and treat any eyesight problems in a child as early as possible.

### Questionnaires about health

In order to prepare for check-ups by school doctors as well as possible, questionnaires are sent out in advance to parents (kindergarten and Year 4 of primary school) and the young people themselves (Year 3 of secondary school). Filling in the questionnaire is voluntary and all information is treated as strictly confidential. The results of these surveys also generate regular health reports.

We evaluate the questionnaires and the findings from the check-ups in anonymised form for statistical purposes. In this way, we obtain vital information about the health of children and young people in Basel and can develop or modify our preventive services in a more targeted way.

### Notifying parents

If it is found in a check-up that a child requires further investigation or action needs to be taken, the parents are informed by telephone or in a personal letter. If necessary, we refer the child / young person to a specialist (e.g. paediatrician, ophthalmologist, etc.)

### Data protection and medical confidentiality

School doctors are bound by medical confidentiality.

The results of check-ups are not passed on to third parties without permission from the parents. Only health-related problems that are relevant to the school, such as the need to wear glasses, can be reported to the teacher.

## Check-ups by school doctors in kindergartens

In kindergarten, children are accompanied to the check-up by school doctors by the kindergarten teacher. The medical practice assistant and school doctor always examine two or three children together. In these small groups, the children are not afraid, cooperate well and usually find the trip to the doctor fun.

### Check-ups during the first year of kindergarten:

- ▶ Eyesight test, including colour vision and spatial perception
- ▶ Hearing test
- ▶ Weight and height measurement
- ▶ Check on the musculoskeletal system and cardiac health
- ▶ Examination of fine and gross motor skills
- ▶ Check on dental health
- ▶ Assessment of linguistic and emotional development
- ▶ Check on vaccination record and recommendations for vaccination

The eyesight test is carried out by an orthoptist, a specially trained expert in detecting impaired vision or squints.

## Check-ups by school doctors in Year 4 of primary school

In Year 4 of primary school, the children come with their class and their teacher to the Schulärztlicher Dienst for their second check-up by the school doctor. The check-up is carried out individually. A team consisting of a medical practice assistant and a school doctor carries out the following checks:

### Checks in Year 4 of primary school:

- ▶ Eyesight test, including colour vision
- ▶ Hearing test
- ▶ Check of vaccination record and recommendations for vaccination
- ▶ Free vaccination if required and with written notification to the parents
- ▶ Weight and height measurement

If you or your child so wish, the school doctor will carry out a further examination or discussion with you.

## Check-ups by school doctors in secondary schools

The check-up by school doctors in secondary schools takes place in Year 3 of secondary school. The children come to the Schulärztlicher Dienst without their teacher. A team consisting of a medical practice assistant and a school doctor carries out the following checks:

### Checks in Year 3 of secondary school:

- ▶ Eyesight test, including colour vision
- ▶ Hearing test
- ▶ Weight and height measurement
- ▶ Check of vaccination record and advice on vaccinations

## Advice and explanations in secondary schools

If there are any health abnormalities, or at the request of the young people, after the check-up we will talk to them about, for example physical development, health difficulties, diet and exercise, stress and pressure, school and lessons, sexuality or dealing with drugs. In this one-to-one talk, the school doctors can give individual tips and recommendations and advise the young people on a healthy lifestyle.



The examinations by school doctors play an important role in the health of children and young people. All the services and vaccinations provided in schools by the Schulärztlicher Dienst are free of charge and voluntary. Our staff are bound by medical confidentiality.



## Good eyesight



Our eyes are highly developed sensory organs. When light enters the eye, sensory cells in our retina are activated. The information that is recorded is passed on and creates an image in our brain. In order to be able to see in three dimensions (spatially), we require good vision in both eyes.

### Preventive check-ups

Focus and colour vision develop during the first year of life. By seeing things every day, the two eyes learn to interact and so three-dimensional (spatial) vision develops. This development process continues until the 10th year of life. If it is not properly completed, then serious visual impairment can remain unless the problem is treated.

Good vision is also very important for a child's overall development. Children with poor vision have to make more effort, have more difficulty reading and learning and with coordination, and this can result in poor concentration or other problematic behaviours. In any case, it is always very important to detect and correct any visual impairment. That's why regular eye checks by a paediatrician or ophthalmologist or by the school doctor are essential.

### Looking out for children with uncorrected visual impairments in the early years of life

Squints or poor focus in one eye can mean that the weak eye does not learn to see properly. As a result, the affected eye "goes blind" and the sharpness of vision cannot later be corrected by glasses. This is why it is particularly important to treat the problem early, ideally before the child is five. For this reason, the examination by school doctors in kindergartens pays particular attention to the eyes.

### Do not hesitate to have your child examined by an ophthalmologist, if ...

- ▶ one or both eyes appear unusually large
- ▶ one pupil looks grey instead of black
- ▶ they have a squint or an eye tremor (nystagmus)
- ▶ they are often clumsy, stumbling, tripping or frequently bumping into things
- ▶ they often have difficulty picking things up
- ▶ they often screw up one or both eyes, blink a lot or hold their head on one side
- ▶ they do not like looking at books or they hold them very close to their face
- ▶ they have difficulty reading or writing, or quickly become tired doing it
- ▶ they often complain of headaches
- ▶ they often rub their eyes, or have streaming or red eyes
- ▶ eyesight problems are common in your family





## Good hearing



After our eyes, our ears are the next most important sensory organ. We need good hearing in order to learn to speak properly, understand other people well and cope safely in our environment. That's why it's important to detect and treat hearing problems at an early stage.

Regular check-ups with your paediatrician and especially with school doctors are very important to keep checking that your child can hear properly. If a hearing problem is detected, appropriate measures can be set in motion.

If our ears are exposed to constant noise from traffic or overly loud music, we place our body under stress and this can lead to hearing problems. Children and young people who cannot hear well often do not notice it themselves. In Switzerland, every 10th young person has hearing that is impaired to some extent.

### You should have your child examined by a doctor when:

- ▶ Your child has frequent ear infections
- ▶ Your child is not making progress in their speech development
- ▶ Your child is not woken or startled by loud noises
- ▶ Your child only answers after some time, or not at all, when spoken to
- ▶ Your son or daughter has problems learning and at school
- ▶ Your child has few social contacts or is a loner
- ▶ Hearing problems are common in your family

### Poor hearing may be caused by:

- ▶ Noise pollution
- ▶ A blockage in the auditory canal caused by ear wax (cerumen)
- ▶ Chronic inflammation of the middle ear
- ▶ Damage to the inner ear caused by infection (e.g. mumps)
- ▶ Congenital hearing problems

### + What you can do as parents

Avoid situations in your daily life where you and your child are exposed to loud noise. Do not use cotton-wool buds to clean ears, as this can encourage the formation of impacted ear wax, or damage the ear drum.

Take ear infections seriously and have them treated by a doctor.

Be careful with loud toys: whistles, children's trumpets, fireworks and so on can permanently damage the hearing.

Make sure that children and young people do not listen to music that is too loud.

Have any noises in the ears that last longer than a day checked out by a doctor.



## Weight, height, diet

Obesity / Znünibox / Rübli, Zimt & Co.



Height and weight are key criteria in the normal development of children and young people. By measuring them and assessing them using what are called growth curves, it is easy to see whether these values are within the normal range.

### Height

**Measuring height** is important in assessing growth. How tall a child grows depends greatly on how tall their parents are. However, occasionally being particularly small or tall can be the symptom of an illness.

### Weight

**Measuring weight** is particularly important nowadays. Many children and young people are overweight. Being underweight, connected with an eating disorder, occurs rarely, but is a serious condition. If young people are too heavy or too light, they will receive advice from the school doctor.

Recording this data also enables us to track the obesity problem in Basel-Stadt and develop and modify preventive projects designed to counteract this trend.

### Rübli, Zimt & Co.

Rübli, Zimt & Co. is a scheme for primary schools on the subject of nutrition. In the exhibition about nutrition, Rübli, Zimt & Co., children learn through play about the key points in eating healthily.

### A healthy body weight

Even though being overweight as a child may not cause any direct serious health problems, it can make related conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and joint trouble more likely even in early adulthood. Being overweight is normally the result of an imbalance between energy intake (too many calories) and energy consumption (too little exercise). **A balanced diet and adequate physical activity are therefore key elements in maintaining a healthy body weight.**



## Healthy eating



For children to grow up healthy, they need a balanced diet and sufficient fluids. With the offering that is available nowadays, it is not always easy to motivate children to eat healthily. Below, you will find some useful tips and a few important basic principles.

### Regular mealtimes are important

Children and young people should eat several small or medium-sized meals over the course of the day. Three main meals and two snacks is perfect. Food tastes best if it is eaten at the table with other members of the family.

### Breakfast and Znüni – a good start to the day

Breakfast supplies the basic energy stores for a long school day. If your child will not eat breakfast, offer them something to drink and give them a big Znüni. Fruit, raw vegetables or wholegrain bread with some cheese or ham are ideal for Znüni. Dried fruit or a small portion of unsalted nuts make a good alternative.

## Healthy Znüni – the Znünibox campaign in kindergartens

To keep going through a day at kindergarten or school, a healthy Znüni is especially important. When each child starts kindergarten, the Schulärztlicher Dienst and the Schulzahnklinik Basel-Stadt (Basel-City School Dental Clinic) give them a Znünibox (lunchbox) and a flyer with ideas about healthy Znünis.

### Quenching their thirst – without sugar

The best drinks for quenching the thirst are tap water, mineral water or unsweetened tea. The main purpose of drinks is to satisfy the need for fluids, and they should contain as little sugar as possible. Sweet drinks such as lemonade, iced tea and cola are not suitable and should only be drunk rarely.

### Lots of fruit and vegetables

If possible, fruit and vegetables should be eaten at every meal. Five portions a day is perfect. Choose fruit and vegetables that are in season, and preferably from the local area. Frozen fruit and vegetables are also rich in nutrients and very suitable for children.

## Tips for reluctant fruit and veg eaters

- ▶ Little fruit or vegetable kebabs with bread and cheese, that children can assemble themselves
- ▶ Home-made finger food (slices of pepperoni, carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, etc.) served with a delicious dip made of quark (cream cheese) and fresh herbs
- ▶ A colourful fruit salad
- ▶ Fruit pureed with milk to make a milkshake or mixed into a plain yoghurt

### Potatoes, rice and pasta fill you up

Pasta, potatoes, rice and bread form the basis of a balanced diet.

Choose wholegrain products that contain more nutrients and keep you feeling full for longer. Make sure you don't use too much fat in preparing meals.

### Dairy products are essential

Dairy products such as milk, plain yoghurt, quark or cheese should be on the menu once or twice every day. They contain a lot of calcium and are important for building healthy bones and teeth.

### Meat, fish, eggs and sausage in moderation

One or two portions a week each of meat, fish and eggs is enough to supply the body with important nutrients such as iron. Sausage products contain a lot of hidden fats and so should only be eaten occasionally.

### Eat fewer fats, sweets and salty snacks

Oils and fats should be used as sparingly as possible. Choose cold-pressed oils like olive oil, pumpkin seed oil, nut and linseed oil. Sweets and salty nibbles should be enjoyed in moderation, because they contain a lot of fat and sugar, but few nutrients.



## Tips for enjoying meals as much as possible

Let your child help with cooking, laying the table and clearing away. Children can judge for themselves how much food they need. Don't force your child to eat if they don't want any more. Offer your child food that they are unfamiliar with. Children learn by imitation and gradually get used to new things. Food is not an educational prop: don't use food to punish or reward your child. If you suspect they might have an allergy or food intolerance, please contact your paediatrician.



# Exercise

Fit and healthy through exercise



Exercise and play are essential for children and young people if they are to grow up healthy and feel good about themselves. Young people should be active for at least 1 hour a day, and smaller children much more.

## Children and young people do not need much to get them exercising.

### We should help them, because regular exercise ...

- ▶ improves motor skills
- ▶ helps them sleep well
- ▶ helps counteract stress, makes them calmer and improves social skills
- ▶ helps with learning and has a positive effect on performance at school
- ▶ improves awareness and speech development
- ▶ encourages good posture and strengthens the bones
- ▶ can give protection against illnesses such as obesity

## Lots of activity, all day long

Children need to be active to remain healthy. The route to school, daily life, the home, leisure time, sports lessons, other school activities and sports clubs all offer opportunities for movement. Make daily exercise an integral part of daily life for you and your children, because any kind of exercise is better than none. There are thousands of ways in which we can get more exercise in our daily lives: For example, walking upstairs, going for a walk, helping around the home or in the garden.

Support your children and teenagers with their exercise and sports activities. Outdoor exercise and activities with other children are preferable, but all other forms of exercise also count. It is especially important for them to be active in their free time because children and teenagers spend many hours a day sitting down studying and in school. Electronic media, such as computers, the Internet, television, DVDs, video games and smart phones are the number one exercise killers. Going to school is an easy way of getting healthy regular exercise if children go on foot or by skateboard, scooter or, later, bicycle.

## Interactive class session SIT-UP

We offer an interactive class lesson for schoolchildren over the age of 14 on the subject of “a healthy back”. This teaches the following concepts:

- The biology of the spine and physiology of sitting
- How to recognise areas of tension, with demonstrations of relaxation exercises
- How to protect your back while lifting and carrying loads
- The theory of how to sit correctly and information about possible aids
- Individual adjustment of computer workstations

The subject is clearly explained and supplemented by individual tips and practical exercises, with all the information being summarised in a magazine.

## Exercising together is more fun

The Sportamt Basel-Stadt (Basel-City Office of Sport) offers a wide range of sports activities for all age groups. You can find more information at [www.bs.ch/ed/jfs](http://www.bs.ch/ed/jfs)

## Tips for parents

It doesn't take much to encourage children and young people to take exercise. Support their natural urge to move about and ...

**offer yourself as a partner for their game or activity**  
**enjoy bike rides, walks, trips to the swimming pool, ball games, etc. as a family**  
**involve the whole family in helping around the home or in the garden**

It is also important that long periods of sitting down alternate with more active periods. That is why you should talk to your children about how long they are allowed to use electronic media each day.

To ensure that enough time remains for exercise, it is generally recommended that kindergarten children spend no more than 30 minutes using electronic media, schoolchildren no more than one hour a day and teenagers a maximum of two hours per day, but preferably less.

# Speech development



For people, talking is the main means of communication. This is how we make contact with our environment, express our needs and share our experiences.

## Abnormalities in speech development

Your child's speech development will be assessed during the check-up by the school doctor at kindergarten. Any abnormalities in speech development will mostly be attributable to difficulties with articulation (pronunciation errors). For example, a child may confuse "l" and "r" or not yet be able to pronounce sibilants. Depending on their age, treatment may be postponed. However, it is important that they are examined carefully by a specialist speech therapist.

Such an examination can also identify other difficulties in the process of language acquisition: speech comprehension impairments, vocabulary limitations, incorrect sentence formation, disturbances in speech flow and phonation, but also reading and spelling problems at key ages.

All kindergartens and schools have speech therapists who will carry out this examination by agreement with the parents.

## Multilingual children

For children growing up speaking two or more languages, it is important that parents talk to their children at home in their mother tongue. It is now known that children who speak their mother tongue well learn German better and faster.

- ▶ If you notice that your child does not pay attention when you read to him or her, shows no interest in singing or storytelling or is not making progress with their speech development, you should have their hearing tested. A child will only be able to learn to speak if it can hear well.

# Healthy teeth



Teeth are very important for health and well-being. Healthy teeth not only allow children to have a healthy smile, they are also necessary for growth and the ability to chew.

## Caries (tooth decay) is an avoidable problem

Caries occurs when certain bacteria and sugar are present in the mouth at the same time, leading to the much feared "cavities" in the teeth. Even milk teeth can be badly damaged by caries. This damage is not eliminated when milk teeth fall out, since decay is also transferred to the adult teeth. That is why it is so important to ensure good oral hygiene – even for very young children. The first visit to the dentist should take place at the age of 2 years. From kindergarten until Year 3 of secondary school, children in Basel-Stadt are examined by the school dentist every year.

## Oral hygiene through regular brushing of teeth

To keep the teeth free of cavities requires good oral hygiene. Cleaning the teeth 3 times a day for 2-3 minutes with a toothpaste containing fluoride is recommended. Try to make sure that snacks between meals are low in sugar. The best things to drink are water or unsweetened tea. The longer the sugar from sugary drinks or traces of food remain in the mouth, the greater the chance that teeth will be damaged. It is important that you help children to clean their teeth until they are 9 years old, and set a good example for them.

## ✚ First aid if a tooth is damaged

If one of your children's permanent teeth is knocked out, broken or loosened as a result of a fall or an impact, it can be saved.

**Never hold the tooth by the root and do not clean it.**

Carry the tooth or the broken piece of tooth in a little milk (water is unsuitable), or better still – if available – in a "tooth rescue box" (available from pharmacies and doctors' surgeries). Treatment is not urgent if it is a baby tooth.

If a permanent tooth is affected, notify your dentist or contact the Schulzahnklinik (school dental clinic) within 24 hours.

**Zahnärztlicher Notfalldienst: 061 261 15 15 (Emergency dental service)**



Explaining, advising and promoting good health

SÄD

Providing explanations and advice and promoting good health are key elements in the work of school doctors. In addition to our medical expertise, we have many years of experience with children and young people and we are familiar with the school system and school routines.

It is our job to support children, young people and their parents throughout the kindergarten and school years and to help them with any questions or problems. We give advice to schoolchildren, parents, teachers and supervisors on **medical, educational and social** issues and we also offer free health consultations on matters of **preventive medicine**. It is not only a question of providing help when problems already exist – on the contrary, an important aspect of our work is health promotion, that is to say maintaining and encouraging a good state of health. We can give advice as required, either in person at the Schulärztlicher Dienst or over the telephone.

#### Services for schools

There are specific situations in which the Schulärztlicher Dienst can be called in by the school or may even have to be, under the Schools Act.

##### ► Dispensation requests

If a schoolchild has to be exempted from school or sports lessons for health reasons for longer than three weeks, the GP must fill in a dispensation request and send it to the Schulärztlicher Dienst for approval. Absences of up to three weeks can normally be authorised by the parents.

##### ► Confidential medical investigation

If teachers are concerned about the health or development of a child or young person, they can use the confidential medical investigation service. This will establish whether medical steps need to be taken or other professionals should be involved, such as the Schulsozialarbeit (Schools Social Service), the Schulpsychologischer Dienst (Schools Psychology Service), etc.

One of the most common reasons for this kind of investigation is **absence** from school. If children are missing school very often for health reasons, the school can call on the Schulärztlicher Dienst to investigate these absences and, if necessary, we can intervene between the parties involved.



### Services for teachers and supervisory staff

The Schulärztlicher Dienst advises schools and day care centres on questions concerning communicable diseases and other health matters. At [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits) there are also fact sheets available about various diseases, providing expert information about the necessary precautions. If specific measures are required in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease, (for example tuberculosis, meningitis, measles, etc.), these will be initiated by the Schulärztlicher Dienst.

### Services for parents

Parents can consult us on educational or social matters connected with health. Since the primary point of contact for individual medical problems should be the paediatrician, the help we can offer for health problems connected with school often takes the form of acting as an intermediary between the various parties involved, for example between parents and the child, school and GP.

### Services for teenagers

Teenagers can turn to us if they have health, school or social problems and we will advise and assist them by telephone, e-mail or in a face-to-face meeting.

#### ► The subject of sexuality

Because the subject of sexuality is very important for teenagers and can give rise to a great many questions and concerns, the Schulärztlicher Dienst offers an **offene Jugendsprechstunde (open-door youth consulting session)** at which a school doctor can answer young people's questions about physical development, love and sexuality.

#### ► The subject of addiction

A survey among Basel schoolchildren in Year 3 of secondary school about the consumption of addictive substances has shown that problematic alcohol consumption is a big issue now among young people.

This is where the preventive workshop called **Tom & Lisa** comes in. This workshop is aimed at teenagers aged between 14 and 16 and is offered to schools in Basel. The aim of the interactive workshop is to tell young people about the effects and the immediate dangers of consuming alcohol and teach them how to reduce health risks when drinking alcohol.

### ► Youth magazines

Several magazines have been developed that address subjects which teens of this age are interested in. Magazines have already been published on the following topics, and these can be obtained free of charge from the Schulärztlicher Dienst, or they can be downloaded from [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits)

#### ► Youth magazine "Hautnah"

Useful tips about skin

#### ► Youth magazine "EATfit"

Magazine about healthy eating

#### ► Youth magazine "Ohaa"

Information about love and sexuality

#### ► Youth magazine "SIT-UP"

Magazine about sitting and back problems

#### ► Youth magazine "flash"

Magazine about addiction

#### ► Youth magazine "relax"

Magazine about stress

#### ► Youth magazine "ready2go"

Magazine about exercise



# Vaccinations



Vaccinations are one of the most effective ways of protecting your child against serious illnesses and their complications.

**Thanks to good vaccines, some once-feared diseases and their, in some cases, serious consequences have now become rare. However, if vaccination levels are insufficiently high, they can recur at any time and threaten both children and adults.**

### How can vaccination prevent disease?

Infectious diseases are triggered by pathogens such as bacteria or viruses. Following an infection, our immune system begins to fight these pathogens by producing defensive substances – so-called antibodies – to counteract precisely those pathogens.

However, with a normal infection, the reaction of the immune system is too slow to prevent the illness.

In vaccination, a safe, weakened or even dead disease pathogen is administered to the body. This gives the body the feeling that it has been infected with the disease so that it produces the same antibodies without becoming ill.

If, later, you are really infected, the body already has its defences ready and is able to stop the illness from breaking out.

### Tolerance of vaccinations

Side-effects may be experienced after a vaccination. However, this is rare. It is possible that slight pain, reddening or swelling may occur at the puncture site. Even less frequent are fatigue, headaches or nausea. These symptoms normally disappear after a short time. Severe side-effects are extremely rare and the benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh that risk.

### How often do I have to have my child vaccinated?

Most children receive the necessary vaccinations from their paediatrician during their first years of life. However, most vaccinations have to be repeated more than once in a lifetime to maintain protection.

### Which vaccinations are carried out during check-ups by a school doctor?

During check-ups in kindergarten, the school-medical team will check vaccination records. If a child has missed some vaccinations, the parents will be informed and can arrange for the school doctor to give any omitted vaccinations.

During the check-up by school doctors in Year 4 of primary school and the vaccination campaign in the first year of secondary school, children and young people can be vaccinated free of charge by the Schulärztlicher Dienst.

During Year 3 of secondary school, vaccination records are examined during the course of the check-up by school doctors and, in the event of missing vaccinations, recommendations for vaccinations will be given or, if desired, an appointment will be arranged for vaccination by the school doctors.

School doctors follow the recommendations of the official Swiss vaccination plan and vaccinate only when necessary and only if the parents have given their written consent.

Children and young people should take their vaccination record with them whenever they visit the Schulärztlicher Dienst!

### Which vaccinations does my child need?

The Bundesamt für Gesundheit (BAG) (Federal Office of Health) publishes the vaccinations recommended for Switzerland in the latest vaccination plan every year.

There are vaccinations that are recommended for all children and youths and others that may also be advisable, depending on personal circumstances.

You should have all the generally recommended vaccinations carried out and talk to your paediatrician about which additional vaccinations might be necessary or advisable for your child.

Alternatively, you can find out more at [www.sichimpfen.ch](http://www.sichimpfen.ch)

## Overview of vaccinations administered by school doctors

### Poliomyelitis

Kinderlähmung

Infection with the poliomyelitis virus may go fully unnoticed or it may lead to severe paralysis of the arms, legs and respiratory muscles. This latter form can lead to serious long-term consequences including joint problems and muscle wasting or even death. For basic protection, five vaccinations are recommended between infancy and school-leaving age.

### Diphtheria

Diphtherie

Diphtheria is a highly infectious bacterial disease of the upper airways. Complications can include paralysis, pneumonia, asphyxiation or inflammation of the cardiac muscle. This vaccination has to keep being repeated throughout one's life.

### Tetanus (lockjaw)

Starrkrampf

Tetanus is carried by a bacterium that is widespread worldwide and can enter the body through wounds. It causes muscle spasms and rigidity, which can lead to paralysis of the respiratory muscles and even death. Even today, the mortality rate for tetanus is 25%. This vaccination has to keep being repeated throughout one's life.

### Whooping cough (pertussis)

Keuchhusten

Whooping cough is a highly infectious disease characterised by severe coughing attacks, mostly at night, causing serious shortage of breath. Infants can suffer paroxysmal choking, sometimes with fatal consequences. This vaccination has to keep being repeated until adulthood.

### Measles

Masern

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that is wrongly regarded as a minor illness. It begins with a high fever, symptoms of a cold and a rash. In most cases, people recover from measles with no problem. However, in some cases, it can lead to severe complications such as pneumonia or meningitis, which can be fatal or cause lasting damage. Vaccination is the only safe form of protection.

Vaccination against measles is carried out at the same time as vaccination against mumps and rubella (MMR vaccination). Two doses are required after which life-long protection is acquired.

### Meningitis (caused by meningococci)

Hirnhautentzündung (durch Meningokokken)

Transmission of the bacteria occurs in close contact with diseased persons, or healthy carriers via nasopharyngeal secretions. The disease can lead to very severe conditions such as meningitis with long-term effects, blood poisoning or death. Children under 5 years and adolescents aged 15-19 years are mainly affected. We offer vaccination during adolescence during the course of the check-up by school doctors.



### Mumps

Mumps

Mumps is an infectious viral disease characterised by a high temperature and painful swelling of the parotid glands. Usually the disease is harmless, but there can be much-feared complications such as meningitis and encephalitis, damage to the inner ear causing deafness or, in boys during puberty, inflammation of the testicles.

Vaccination against mumps is carried out at the same time as vaccination against measles and rubella (MMR vaccination). Two doses are required after which life-long protection is acquired.

### Rubella

Röteln

Infection with rubella is normally harmless, causing only a slight feeling of illness and a rash. Rubella infection is most dangerous for pregnant women because it can lead to serious deformities or miscarrying of the unborn child. Vaccination against rubella is carried out at the same time as vaccination against measles and mumps (MMR vaccination). Two doses are required after which life-long protection is acquired.

### Chicken pox (varicella)

Varizellen

Chicken pox is a highly infectious viral disease characterised by high temperature and a typical, very itchy rash causing blisters all over the body. Since 2023, vaccination has been recommended as early as infancy together with protection against measles, mumps and rubella, and as a booster vaccination for adolescents. Two vaccination doses are required for lifelong protection.

### Hepatitis B (inflammation of the liver)

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious viral disease. Infection with the hepatitis B virus can be the result of contact with the tiniest amount of blood or other bodily fluids (e.g. in unprotected sexual intercourse) or with unclean instruments used for piercings/tattoos or injections. Hepatitis viruses damage the liver and can cause fever, jaundice, extreme fatigue, loss of appetite and stomach ache. These symptoms vary from the barely noticeable to the very severe. Long-term consequences such as cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer are much feared. Vaccination against hepatitis B is recommended for all young people aged between 11 and 15 and provides the best protection from infection.

### Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Humane Papillomaviren (HPV)

HP viruses give rise to genital warts, cervical cancer and other HPV-associated types of cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common form of cancer in women worldwide after breast cancer. The human papillomavirus, HPV for short, is the pathogen in almost all cases of cervical cancer. The virus is transmitted through sexual intercourse and close bodily contact. Youths should be vaccinated between the ages of 11 and 14 and definitely before they first have sexual intercourse. The vaccination is also recommended for young women and men up to the age of 26. The vaccination is free if it is carried out as part of a cantonal vaccination programme, for example by the Schulärztlicher Dienst.

# Head lice – get rid of them!



Head lice are troublesome and it is easier to catch them than to get rid of them again. Unfortunately, the creatures cannot be eradicated and so people must learn to live with them. Here we provide you with some information and tips to help make the periods you spend with head lice in the family as short and infrequent as possible:

**Tip 1** Having head lice has nothing to do with hygiene. Washing your hair every day does not protect you from head lice.

**Tip 2** They are transmitted by direct head-to-head contact. Head lice cannot jump.

**Tip 3** If your child has head lice, please notify those who have had close contact with your child and the school/kindergarten.

**Tip 4** During “lice periods”, check the hair at least once per week for head lice and nits (empty lice eggs). Compared to dandruff, nits will stick to hair and cannot be removed as easily.

**Tip 5** Only use a head lice treatment (shampoo) if you find living head lice. Preventive treatment is no use!

**Tip 6** There are various different treatments for head lice. We recommend a shampoo which has a physical effect. Ask for advice at the chemist's or find out more from [www.lausinfo.ch](http://www.lausinfo.ch).

As part of every treatment, the hair should be combed through twice a week with a special nit comb.

**Tip 7** Don't waste your time cleaning bed linen, clothes, toys, etc. Head lice CANNOT be transmitted via this kind of object. Head lice never leave the head, because then they would die. If a head louse falls out of your hair, it can no longer survive. Clean combs and hair utensils for 10 minutes in hot (60°) soapy water.

**Tip 8** Preventive measures: tie up long hair, check all members of the family with the nit comb once a week.



If you have any question, the Schulärztlicher Dienst will be pleased to help.

or you can find information at [www.lausinfo.ch](http://www.lausinfo.ch)

# What can I do if my child is ill?



When children are ill they should stay at home until their temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours and they feel well again. For certain infectious diseases, there are special guidelines about exclusion from school which you can find in our fact sheets (see Infobox).

When children are ill, they need – in addition to any medical treatment which may be required – familiar surroundings and loving care at home. Children who have had a high temperature may only attend day care, kindergarten or school again when they feel generally better and have been **free of fever, without the use of medication, for more than 24 hours.**

In the case of certain infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough, etc. children can be excluded from their day-care centre, kindergarten or school for a certain period regardless of their state of health. In the case of measles, this applies not only to the sick child but also to children who have been in close contact with him or her and have not been, or not adequately, vaccinated against measles. These measures are designed to prevent further infections.

This means that in some cases of infectious diseases it can be necessary to inform the parents of the other children. On the one hand, the parents can be told in this way about any special symptoms they should look out for, and on the other, the parents are able to contact their paediatrician early if they have any questions. At [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits) you can find fact sheets giving important information about the most common diseases (see Infobox).

For parents, sick children often represent an additional challenge because of the childcare situation. Should you be unable to provide childcare personally, i.e. because of your work, it will be helpful to give early consideration to who could look after your child should they fall ill.

You should also have your child's **vaccination record** regularly checked by **your paediatrician** so that you can catch up on any missing vaccinations.

## Fact sheets

The fact sheets are a quick way of finding factually correct information about common illnesses or risks and their consequences with regard to attending day care, kindergarten or school.

You can find these fact sheets covering everything from A as in 'Augenentzündung' (ophthalmitis), to Z as in 'Zecken' (ticks) on our website [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits).

# The right schoolbag



Having the right school bag is important for maintaining a healthy back and for keeping safe in road traffic. That's why you should take certain things into consideration when choosing a schoolbag:

## Tip 1

Your child or teenager should like the schoolbag (try to choose it together). When purchasing, check for the presence of: bfu seal of approval, TÜV label or a standard-compliance sticker.

## Tip 2

The schoolbag should itself be light (maximum weight 1.2 kg), be worn on the back and be fully adjusted for the body height of the child.

## Tip 3

The schoolbag should be made of sturdy, water-repellent material and have sufficient reflectors and fluorescent surfaces.

## Tip 4

The schoolbag should only be as full as necessary and properly packed.

## + Notes for the school routine

How much a full schoolbag should weigh as a maximum depends on your child's weight.

For children of average weight:

Child in kg	Schoolbag in approx. kg	Child in kg	Schoolbag in approx. kg
up to 24 kg	3.0 kg	41–44 kg	5.5 kg
25–28 kg	3.5 kg	45–48 kg	6.0 kg
29–32 kg	4.0 kg	49–52 kg	6.5 kg
33–36 kg	4.5 kg	Over 53 kg	7.0 kg
37–40 kg	5.0 kg		

Ask the teacher whether certain exercise books or textbooks can be left in school so that your children only have to carry what they really need.

# Mental well-being



Well-being does not only refer to physical health but also to a well-balanced state of mind.

## Mental well-being

Most of all, children need a familiar environment in which they feel secure and can develop freely. That means giving them not only freedom but also structures and rules. Every child needs sufficient restful sleep, a balanced diet, and opportunities for play and exercise, if they are to develop healthily.

In order to prepare children for the greater and lesser tribulations of life, it is very important to teach them self-confidence and self-worth. Children want to be taken seriously and they need attention. Always be willing to listen to their problems and help them to find solutions. You are important role models for your child. By also looking after your own mental well-being, you will be showing your child strategies for dealing with stress and workloads.

## + Tips

Seek help early on if you feel that you or your child are suffering. Relatives, neighbours and friends will be pleased to help you if you are open about your problems. In addition, there is a large network of professional support services that can help you where necessary.



On our website [www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits) you can find lots of useful information and tips about different aspects of health such as diet and exercise, mental health, addiction, etc.

[www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits)  
In the Schulgesundheits section you can find out about:

- ▶ Check-ups from school doctors
- ▶ Vaccinations from school doctors
- ▶ Advisory services for students, parents and teachers
- ▶ Medical examinations concerning absences or school attendance exemptions
- ▶ Fact sheets on various diseases
- ▶ Resources for schools on a wide range of subjects

[www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits)

SÄD

# Important addresses



## Universitäts-Kinderspital beider Basel (UKBB)

(up to approx. 17 years)

Spitalstrasse 33, 4056 Basel  
Tel.: 061 704 12 12  
www.ukbb.ch

## Universitätsspital Basel (USB)

(from 16 years)

Petersgraben 4, 4031 Basel  
Tel.: 061 265 25 25  
www.unispital-basel.ch

## Tox Info Suisse

(Poisoning emergencies)

Notfalltelefon: 145  
www.toxinfo.ch

## Universitäre Psychiatrische Kliniken Basel (UPK) für Kinder- und Jugendliche (up to 18 years)

Kornhausgasse 7, 4051 Basel  
Tel.: 061 325 82 00  
www.upk.ch

## Universitäre Psychiatrische Kliniken Basel (UPK) für Erwachsene (from 18 years)

Wilhelm Klein-Strasse 27, 4002 Basel  
Tel.: 061 325 51 11  
www.upk.ch

## Schulpsychologischer Dienst Basel-Stadt (SPD)

Austrasse 67 and 120, 4051 Basel  
Tel.: 061 267 69 00  
www.bs.ch/ed/volksschulen/spd

## UZB Universitäres Zentrum für Zahnmedizin Basel Kinder- und Jugendzahnmedizin (Schulzahnklinik)

Mattenstrasse 40, 4058 Basel  
Tel.: 061 267 25 25  
E-Mail: akjzm@uzb.ch  
www.uzb.ch

## Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendmedizin Regio Basel

www.kindermedizin-regiobasel.ch

## Opferhilfe beider Basel

Kinder- und Jugendberatung bei Gewalt  
Steinengraben 5, 4051 Basel  
Tel.: 061 205 09 10  
www.opferhilfe-beiderbasel.ch

## FABE Familien-, Paar- und Erziehungsberatung

Greifengasse 23, 4005 Basel  
Tel.: 061 686 68 68  
E-Mail: info@fabe.ch  
www.fabe.ch

## Gesundheitsdepartement Basel-Stadt

Abteilung Sucht  
Malzgasse 30, 4001 Basel  
Tel.: 061 267 89 00

## Telefon 143 (telephone helpline for parents)

Tel.: 143  
www.basel.143.ch

## Telefon 147 (telephone helpline for children and young people)

Tel.: 147  
SMS: 147  
E-Mail: beratung@147.ch  
www.147.ch

## Other links:

[www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits](http://www.bs.ch/schulgesundheits)  
[www.lausinfo.ch](http://www.lausinfo.ch)  
[www.bs.ch/ed](http://www.bs.ch/ed)  
[www.bag.admin.ch](http://www.bag.admin.ch)

The check-ups carried out by school doctors and the other services provided by the Schulärztlicher Dienst Basel-Stadt make an important contribution to the health and well-being of children and young people. Our staff will be pleased to advise you and answer your questions.

**Schulärztlicher Dienst**

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4001 Basel  
Tel.: +41 61 267 90 00  
E-Mail: [schularzt@bs.ch](mailto:schularzt@bs.ch)

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13.30 – 17.00

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