

## Important Notice

If your foster child has a heart or lung disease, a problem with his or her immune system, HIV, sickle cell disease or a history of cancer, the recommendations in this manual do not apply. These children are more likely to have a serious illness than healthy children. If your child has any of these diseases, and you suspect your child is getting sick, call his or her doctor immediately. The only exception to this rule is if your child's primary care doctor or specialist has provided you with different instructions in the event of a medical emergency. In this case, you should follow the plan outlined by your child's doctor when your child has symptoms.

## First Step

Fill in the inside back cover of this manual with your child's information. In an emergency, it can be difficult to remember this information and it helps to have it somewhere that is easy to locate. You can also keep a copy of your child's immunization record with this book.

## "Well-Child Visits" and Schedule

Children need routine check-ups (also known as "well-child visits") to make sure they are healthy and growing normally.

- Newborn
- First week of life
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months (1 year)
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- Annually thereafter

The doctor may recommend more frequent visits to monitor your foster child's health and development.

## Immunizations (Shots or Vaccinations)

Immunizations are important tools to prevent your child from getting serious diseases. They teach the body's immune system to fight certain types of viruses and bacteria. In the past, your foster child may not have received all of the recommended vaccines at the recommended ages. Your child's doctor will tell you when your child needs immunizations. Several shots may be given at the same medical visit.

- After your child gets a vaccine, the area around the injection site may be sore and a little red. This may last for 2-3 days.
- Your child may be more irritable (cranky) or have a slightly elevated temperature.
- You can give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) for these symptoms, if approved by a doctor.
- Very rarely, children can have more serious reactions to immunizations. These require medical attention and treatment.
- Your child's doctor will give you more specific information about the particular vaccine your child is receiving at the time of the injection, including a list of possible side effects and how to recognize them.

Many foster children have lived in places where they have been neglected and/ or abused. Studies have shown that children living in foster care generally have more chronic medical, developmental, and behavioral problems than children living with their birth parents. Foster parents are usually responsible for assuring that their foster children receive appropriate and timely medical care. However, it can be difficult to know when a child needs to see a doctor.