The Pediatric Patient

1. The pediatric patient is not a small adult. They are each unique individuals, different than adult patients.

2. The pediatric patient needs age and developmentally specific care. Treat each patient individually based on these needs. It is common for a pediatric patient to regress to a previous developmental stage.

3. Growth and development issues are significant in pediatric patients. Special issues such as delayed growth, immunizations, missing school, starting menses late and the family dynamics are all very important. When treating diseases and promoting health, we also need to promote adequate growth and development.

4. The pediatric patient is a part of the family unit. Have the family participate in the patient's care.

5. The pediatric patient is dependent on others for basic care needs. Remember that you are an advocate for this patient.

6. The pediatric patient can become unstable and decompensate very rapidly. Children have immature respiratory, cardiovascular and immune systems. Because of their small size, children, especially infants, can become dehydrated easily and IVs can infiltrate quickly.

7. Pediatric patients are small and even a little amount of blood taken for labs can make them anemic and cause problems. Refer to Maximum Lab Draw table.

8. Even if the patient is young, they need to be included in both teaching and their care. Use words that are simple for them to understand and that are not threatening. Remember that young children are very concrete thinkers and take words at their literal value.

9. Play is an important part of a child's world. Utilize it for distraction to help reduce fear, anxiety and pain and also as a teaching aid.

10. We provide atraumatic care for pediatric patients. This means we try and make traumatic experiences like IV and lab sticks, as painless as possible by using numbing products like EMLA and providing distraction techniques.

11. Sometimes pediatric patients are too small and too young to tell us how they are feeling. Assess facial expressions, behavior and play.

12. Safety prevention is a major issue for the pediatric patient. Accidents are a leading cause of death and serious injury in the pediatric population.

“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove…but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child”.
The Pediatric Patient

13. When doing discharge teaching with patients and families don't forget the simple things like well baby care and safety prevention.

"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove…but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child".