

The Essential Medical Apps for Taking Care of Children

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The following is a list of essential medical apps family physicians should have on their smartphones when taking care of children. Links to iPhone and Android platforms are provided for each app. The apps are listed based on my experiences working as a full scope Family Medicine physician including obstetrics and pediatrics.

1) UpToDate or Dynamed/Dynamed Plus

For many of us, UpToDate is the medical application of choice for answering clinical questions. This app is ideal at the point care in clinic, on the ward, in the NICU/PICU, during rounds, morning report, anywhere really. It is the most comprehensive app available for primary care specialties such as pediatrics and is available as a mobile app for individual and institutional subscribers to UpToDate.

That said, UpToDate isn't the only choice out there for quick medical reference tools. Alternative reference apps that hold their own against UpToDate include Dynamed. Although not as comprehensive as UpToDate, Dynamed/Dynamed Plus is one of the most evidence based apps available. The interface takes some getting used to, but is efficient once you are used to it. Other alternatives would include Essential Evidence Plus and Medscape.

UpToDate:

Price: \$495/year UpToDate

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Dynamed:

Price: \$395/year for Dynamed

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

2) Drug Wars: Epocrates or Micromedex or Lexi-Comp

Epocrates has been my go to drug guide since I was a medical student. It has changed a lot over the years, but the most important feature has remained the same. It simply has the friendliest, fastest user interface of any of the comprehensive drug guides. If you purchase the premium, Epocrates Essentials you also receive a fairly useful medical calculator, point of care tables, alternative medicines, and a disease content section developed in conjunction with the British Medical Journal.

However, for the most detailed and complete drug information available you simply cannot go wrong with Lexi-Comp. I find that I use Epocrates more in clinic when I need its speed and Lexi-Comp when I am on the wards and need more detail about a particular medication. Further, while Epocrates might have a free version, they do have a closer relationship with pharma and your personal information is shared with outside organizations.

An outstanding and *significantly cheaper alternative* to Epocrates Essentials or Lexi-Comp is Micromedex. This app may be available to readers via institutional subscription, but can be obtained on its own for a small annual fee. Micromedex provides a similar level of detail as Lexi-Comp on issues such as pharmacokinetics that are missing from Epocrates.

Price: Basic: Free; Epocrates Essentials: \$159.99/year

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Price: \$175/year Lexi-Comp Clinical Suite to \$595/year Lexi-Comp Complete + Online

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Price: \$2.99/year Micromedex Drug Reference Essentials

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

3) Red Book or Nelson's plus Pneumonia and iGuideline

The Johns Hopkins ABX guide is my go-to "bug" guide, but it doesn't include pediatric infectious disease recommendations. The "gold standards" for pediatric infectious disease topics are the AAP Red Book and Nelson's Pediatric Antimicrobial Therapy. Both contain valuable information, but each has significant drawbacks. The Red Book is quite expensive for a standalone app if you are not an AAP member, especially since much of its information could be found in UpToDate and/or Dynamed. If you subscribe to Pediatrics Care Online, you can access the Red Book. The key with many of the AAP publications is to ensure you are a dues paying member as this permits access to many of their publications for free. I found the Red Book to be a useful "replacement" for the otherwise hefty AAP text. The cheaper Nelson's lacks the textbook like feel of the Red Book, but is hindered by an extremely clunky user interface. I do not recommend it. Two related infectious disease apps are Pneumonia and iGuideline. Pneumonia is a free app from Joshua Steinberg that includes both adult and pediatric pneumonia guidelines. [iGuideline](#) is a free collection of guidelines including pneumonia and fever without source among others developed by a children's hospital in Kansas City.

Red Book:

Price: \$149.99 (free for AAP members)

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Nelson's Pediatric Antimicrobial Therapy:

Price: \$39.99

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

Pneumonia:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

iGuidelines:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

4) Shots and CDC Vaccine Schedules Apps

There is no right answer when it comes to finding a good vaccination app, as I find it to be a personal decision based on your needs and comfort with the app's user interface. Of the many vaccine apps on my iPhone, I find Shots and the CDC Vaccine Schedules apps each very useful. I tend to use Shots more from experience than anything else, but the CDC Vaccine interface is pretty nice. The key with vaccine apps is updates. With the ACIP recently updating flu vaccine guidelines in children, Shots contains the updates whereas the CDC app refers you to their website to view the current update. For a fantastic app on vaccines for parents, make sure to "prescribe" CHOP Vaccines on the Go. This app is truly a one stop shop to educate parents and assist you in debunking the many myths surrounding vaccines.

Shots:

Price: \$Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

CDC Vaccine Schedules:

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

CHOP Vaccines on the Go:

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

5) Kidometer and Pedi QuikCalc

When it comes to outstanding pediatrics apps for family physicians there are many options, but one of the best is Kidometer. Kidometer combines a developmental milestones, vaccines, lab values, nutritional information, and critical care app all in one. The problem is that Kidometer hasn't been updated in two years and doesn't do peds medication dosing.

To fill the gaps of the orphaned Kidometer, I recommend Pedi QuikCalc. Although many "adult" drug guides such as Epocrates and Lexi-Comp perform peds medication dosing, none are easier to use at the point of care than Pedi QuikCalc—the best peds dosing app since PediDoser was taken off the app store. Another alternative is BluCard described below.

Kidometer:

Price: \$4.99

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

Pedi QuikCalc:

Price: \$1.99

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

6) Pedi STAT, BluCard, EMRA Peds Meds, iNRP

When it comes to rapidly finding the proper medication doses and resuscitation gear needed for peds emergencies, the gold standard is Pedi STAT. It is simply outstanding for ease of use and functionality when you don't have a Broselow tape in your hands. But Pedi STAT isn't the only show in town. Excellent alternatives include BluCard (which also is an outstanding pediatric medication dosing app) and EMRA Peds Meds. If you are looking strictly for a nice summary of the NRP algorithm, then consider iNRP. It is from the makers of the NRP guidelines, but is only a web-app.

Pedi STAT:

Price: \$7.87

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

BluCard:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

EMRA Peds Meds:

Price: \$2.99

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

iNRP:

Price: Free

Web app only: <http://inrp.mobi/>

7) Pediatric Care Online and AAP Apps

Is there a comprehensive, all-encompassing pediatrics app? I stated at the beginning of this list, that either UpToDate or Dynamed/Dynamed Plus fit that bill. One alternative, especially for AAP members, is the excellent Pediatrics Care Online. This app includes a pediatric quick reference text book, Bright Futures well child resources, a pediatric drug dosing guide, the Red Book and an online textbook, all of the AAP guidelines, etc. The [AAP offers a wide variety of apps](#) from the official AAP app to Healthy Children Magazine. Most are free to AAP members and many are free, though some are seemingly overpriced and clunky to use.

Pediatric Care Online:

Price: Free to AAP members

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

8) Apps for Parents

What apps do we recommend you consider “prescribing” to parents? Those apps could be an entire review unto itself. Some of the apps, that I have prescribed to parents include Healthy Children, KidsDoc, WebMD Baby, CHOP Vaccines on the Go, and Sprout Baby. For answers to questions about overall children’s health, especially development in the first years of life, I frequently recommend Healthy Children (the website is much more user friendly than the app), WebMD Baby, and Sprout (not sure I entirely trust the information, but the interface is very slick). For vaccine myth busting, I recommend CHOP Vaccines on the Go for the well written articles, videos and reliable information. Finally, for pediatric urgencies and emergencies, I recommend KidsDoc. This app is like having a doc in the home with information on a wide variety of medical conditions and common drug dosing tables for parents.

Healthy Children:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

WebMD Baby:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Sprout:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

CHOP Vaccines on the Go:

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

KidsDoc:

Price: \$1.99

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

9) VisualDx

Not a day of clinic goes by in Family Medicine where a parent brings in a child who has a rash or skin lesion they want evaluated. Although many of us are comfortable with common skin rashes such as eczema, rashes that defy easy pattern recognition are frequent and complicated by systemic signs and symptoms or chronic medical conditions. Prior to my smart device days, I would break out a dermatology text such as Habif's Clinical Dermatology. Now with derm apps such as VisualDx, textbooks are out. VisualDx allows you to search by topic—such as eczema to see a wide variety of pictures, diagnostic signs/symptoms, differential diagnosis, and treatment options. But what really stands out is its ability to allow you to build a differential diagnosis by combining history and physical exam findings. You plug into the menu what you are seeing using common dermatology terms, add other physical exam findings, vitals, history and it generates a handy differential diagnosis. I really haven't found an alternative dermatology app that I prefer, but an alternative would be EM Rashes.

VisualDX:

Price: \$199.99 Essentials; \$299.99 Complete

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

EM Rashes:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.

10) Bili Apps

For making clinical decisions regarding phototherapy, you can't go wrong with either Bilicalc or Bilitool; although, Bilicalc is not free (\$1.99) and Bilitool is only a web app currently. You are likely better off paying a dollar more for PediQuikCalc which contains Bilicalc and much more.

Bilicalc:

[iMedicalApps Review](#)

Price: \$1.99

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

11) Misc apps

Some apps just don't "fit" nicely into any one category. Need an app for promoting children's' oral health? Make sure you download the excellent and free app, SmilesForLife, from the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine. It contains a handy fluoride dosing table among other useful tools. Trying to help parents pick and fit a car seat for their newborn or upgrading seats for their toddler? Consider downloading either Car Seat Helper or Car Seat Check for recommendations. Another great free app from Joshua Steinberg is Lead Screen, especially useful in states that mandate lead screening. Finally, a few free apps from the AAP include ADHD tracker and Change Talk, an app that assists providers in tackling tough conversations about weight and pediatric obesity.

SmilesForLife:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Car Seat Helper:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

[Android Link](#)

Car Seat Check:

Price: \$1.99

[iTunes Link](#)
[Android Link](#)

Lead Screen:

Price: Free

[iTunes Link](#)

Not available for Android at this time.