

# Health and Wellness: 15 Months

## Development

In the next 3 months, your child may:

- show affection
- imitate activities
- stack objects
- throw objects
- follow simple commands
- say 8 or more words
- walk independently
- climb on objects to reach something.

## Feeding Tips

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands and face often. This is especially important before eating and drinking.
- Give your child healthful foods that can be chewed easily. Make sure the food is small enough or soft enough to prevent choking. High-risk foods include grapes, hot dogs and string cheese. Cut these foods lengthwise. Do not give your child whole nuts or popcorn.
- Your child will prefer certain foods over others. Don't worry — this will change. Continue to offer a variety of healthful foods even if your child does not always eat them.
- Make sure to offer your child a spoon to use when eating. He or she will need a lot of practice.
- Your child should eat 3 meals and 1 to 2 snacks each day. Give your child healthful snacks such as soft fruit, yogurt, cheese and crackers.

- Your child should only eat when sitting at the table.
- Talk with your health care provider about giving your child a vitamin D supplement. Milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.

## Sleep

- Your child may sleep about 13 hours each day. Consistent bedtimes are best.
- Your child may go from two to one nap each day during the next 6 months.
- Continue your calming bedtime routine. This can include giving a bath, reading books or singing songs.

## Safety

- **Never shake or hit your child.**
  - If you are losing control, take a few deep breaths, put your child in a safe place and go into another room for a few minutes. If possible, have someone else watch your child so you can take a break. Call a friend, your local Crisis Nursery or United Way at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.
- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your baby every time he or she rides in a vehicle. The car seat must be properly secured in the back seat.
  - The car seat should be rear-facing (facing the rear window) until your baby is at least 2 years old. Your baby should continue to be rear-facing until he or she passes the height and weight limits for his or her convertible (toddler) car seat.

**(over)**

- Car seat straps should fit snugly against your baby. Layer blankets or car seat covers over your baby for warmth. Snowsuits are not necessary.
- It's very important to always read the car seat and vehicle owner's manual for proper installation.
- For full details about state your state laws please visit [Child Passenger Safety - Child Passenger Safety \(mn.gov\)](http://Child Passenger Safety - Child Passenger Safety (mn.gov)) or [Wisconsin Department of Transportation Child safety seat laws \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://Wisconsin Department of Transportation Child safety seat laws (wisconsin.gov)).
- Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Always put a helmet on your child if he or she rides in a bicycle carrier or behind you on a bike.
- When your child is outside, use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Use a brand with the active ingredients titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Avoid any that contain oxybenzone.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons locked and out of your child's reach.
- Call the poison control center or your health provider for instructions in case your child swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your phone or program them into your phone.
- Create a safe area for your child to play. Use safety catches on drawers and cupboards. Cover electrical outlets with plastic covers.
- Falls are common at this age. Put gates on all stairways and doors to dangerous areas.
- Do not leave your child alone in the car or the house, even for a moment.
- Never leave your child alone in the bathtub or near water. A child can drown in as little as 1 inch of water. The number one cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 is drowning.
- Never put hot liquids near table or countertop edges. Keep your child away from a hot stove, oven and furnace.
- Make sure the crib mattress is at its lowest setting. It's time to move your child to a toddler bed when he or she tries to climb out of the crib.
- Never place a string or necklace around your child's neck due to the risk of strangulation. This also applies to attaching a pacifier to a string or cord.
- Do not let anyone smoke or vape in your house or car at any time.

## What To Know About Screen Time

- The first two years of life are critical for the growth and development of your child's brain. Your child needs positive interaction with other children and adults.
- Screen time includes watching television and using devices such as cellphones, video games, computers and other electronics.
- Screen time has a negative effect on your child's development. This is especially true when your child is learning to talk and play with others.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend any screen time (except for video-chatting) for children younger than 18 months.

## What Your Child Needs

- Talk, sing and read to your child often. Show your child picture books. Point to objects and name them. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.
- Hug, cuddle and kiss your child often. Your child is gaining independence but still needs to know you love and support him or her.
- Let your child make some choices. Ask him or her, "Would you like to wear the green shirt or the red shirt?"
- Set clear rules and be consistent with them.
- Teach and praise positive behaviors. Distract and prevent negative or dangerous behaviors.

- Ignore temper tantrums. Make sure your child is safe during the tantrum. Or, you may hold your child gently, but firmly.
- Consider joining a parent-child group such as Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) through your local school district.

## Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting at age 3 years or earlier if there are questions or concerns. Your child may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.
- Brush your child's teeth with a soft-bristled toothbrush when he or she wakes up and before he or she goes to bed. You should use a small amount (size of a grain of rice) of toothpaste with fluoride. Let your child play with the toothbrush after brushing.
- After brushing your child's teeth in the evening, only give him or her water overnight. Other beverages, including milk, increase the risk of cavities.
- Your child should no longer be using a bottle. Using bottles increases the risk of cavities and ear infections.

## Community and Health Information Resources

- **Healthy Children**  
— [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- **Poison Control**  
— 1-800-222-1222 or [poison.org](http://poison.org)

## Minnesota

- **MinnesotaHelp.info®**  
— [mnhelp.info](http://mnhelp.info)
- **United Way**  
— [211unitedway.org](http://211unitedway.org)  
— dial 211 or 651-291-0211

- **Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program**  
— [health.state.mn.us/wic](http://health.state.mn.us/wic)
- **Early Childhood Family Education**  
— [education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/elsprog/ECFE](http://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/elsprog/ECFE)
- **Parent Aware**  
— [parentaware.org](http://parentaware.org)
- **Help Me Grow**  
— [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org)

## Wisconsin

- **211 Wisconsin**  
— [211wisconsin.communityos.org](http://211wisconsin.communityos.org)  
— dial 211 or 1-877-947-2211
- **Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program**  
— [dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic)
- **Early Childhood Family Education**  
— [dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood](http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood)
- **Child Aware of America (Wisconsin)**  
— [childcareaware.org/state/wisconsin](http://childcareaware.org/state/wisconsin)
- **Birth to 3 Program**  
— [dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3)

## Your Child's Next Well Checkup

- Your child's next well checkup will be at 18 months.
- Your child may need these vaccinations:
  - ☐ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
  - ☐ HepA (hepatitis A)
  - ☐ influenza.

Information about the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is available if your child is eligible for the program. VFC is a federally funded program that offers vaccines at no cost.

Talk with your health care provider about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) after your child's immunizations.