

# Health and Wellness: 2 ½ Years

## Development

At this age, your child may:

- kick a ball
- jump in place
- throw a ball overhand
- begin to run
- build a tower of 4 or more blocks
- sort shapes and colors
- walk up and down stairs holding the railing or holding someone's hand
- take off clothing
- pull up pants with help
- wash and dry his or her hands
- speak sentences of 2 to 4 words and start using pronouns (me, you, I)
- know names of familiar people and body parts
- repeat words overheard in conversation
- show more independence
- start playing with other children
- show more interest in toilet training.

## Feeding Tips

- Give your child healthful snacks like fruits and vegetables. Avoid junk foods and unhealthy snacks and soft drinks.
- Your child may have strong food likes and dislikes. He or she is growing slowly and may go for days without eating much or go for days eating almost nonstop.

- Your child needs at least 700 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day.
- Milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.

## Sleep

- Your child may stop taking regular naps.
- Continue your regular nighttime routine: bath, brushing teeth and reading.
- Your child may be afraid of the dark or monsters. This is normal. You may want to use a night light to help calm his or her fears.
- Let your child talk about nightmares. Provide comfort and reassurance.

## Physical Activity

- Your child needs at least 60 minutes of active playtime each day.
- Physical activity helps build strong bones and muscles, lowers your child's risk of certain diseases (such as diabetes), increases flexibility, and increases self-esteem.
- Watch your child during any physical activity. Or better yet, join in!

## Safety

- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your child every time he or she rides in a vehicle.

**(over)**

- Your child must be in a car seat in the back seat. Ideally your child should continue to be rear-facing until he or she passes the height and weight limits for his or her convertible (toddler) car seat.
- Car seat straps should fit snugly against your child. Do not use bulky jackets or snowsuits under car seat straps.
- Be a good role model for your child. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Protect your child from falls, burns, drowning, choking and other accidents.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your child's reach.
- Call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) or your health care provider for directions in case your child swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program them into your phone.
- Do not leave your child alone in the car or the house, even for a minute.
- Always watch your child when playing outside near a street.
- Make a safe play area, if possible.
- Always watch your child near water. "Knowing how to swim" does not make him or her safe in the water.
- Lock up any poisons or toxic substances.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting your child to 1 hour or less of high-quality programs each day. Watch these programs with your child to help him or her better understand them.

## What Your Child Needs

- Your child may throw temper tantrums. Make sure he or she is safe and ignore the tantrums. If you give in, your child will throw more tantrums.
- Offer your child choices such as clothes, stories or breakfast foods. This will encourage decision-making.
- Read to your child each day. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.

- Let your child explore, show, initiate and communicate.
- **Never shake or hit your child.** If you think you are losing control, make sure your child is safe and take a 10-minute time out. If you are still not calm, call a friend, neighbor or relative to come over and help you. If you have no other options, call your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.
- If you do not use daycare, consider enrolling your child in nursery school or play groups.

## Toilet Training

- Your child may be ready to start toilet training between 2 and 3 years old. Signs your child may be ready include:
  - stays dry for at least 2 hours during the day or after a nap
  - has regular bowel movements or uses words or facial expressions to say he is about to have a bowel movement
  - is uncomfortable wearing a dirty diaper
  - asks to use the potty chair
  - wants to wear underwear.
- Do not make your child use the toilet or get upset if he or she has an accident. Always remain calm and give your child lots of encouragement and praise.
- Avoid toilet training if your family is under stress, such as planning a move or welcoming a baby.

## Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting at age 3 or earlier if there are questions or concerns. (Your child may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)
- Brush your child's teeth 1 to 2 times each day with a soft-bristled toothbrush. You do not need to use toothpaste. If you do, use a very small amount. Let your child play with the toothbrush after brushing.

## Lab Work

Your child may need to have his or her lead levels checked:

- Lead – This is a blood test to look for high levels of lead in the blood. Lead is a metal that can get into a child’s body from many things. Evidence shows that lead can be harmful to a child if the level is too high.

## Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive this shot at this time:

- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your child’s immunizations.

## Your Child’s Next Well Checkup

- Your child’s next well checkup will be at age 3.
- Your child may receive this shot at this time:
  - influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your child’s immunizations.