

Health and Wellness: 15 Months

Development

At this age, your child may:

- begin to feed himself or herself
- say four to 10 words
- stand alone and walk
- stoop to pick up a toy
- roll or toss a ball
- drink from a sippy cup.

Feeding Tips

- Your child can eat table foods and drink whole milk each day.
- Give your child foods that are healthful and can be chewed easily.
- Your child will prefer certain foods over others. Don't worry — this will change.
- You may offer your child a spoon to use. He or she will need lots of practice.
- Avoid small, hard foods that can cause choking (such as popcorn, nuts, hot dogs and carrots).
- Your child may eat five to six small meals a day.
- Give your child healthy snacks such as soft fruit, yogurt, cheese and crackers.
- 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.

Toilet Training

- This age is a little too young to begin toilet training. You can put a potty chair in the bathroom. At this age, your child will think of the potty chair as a toy.

Sleep

- Your child may go from two to one nap each day during the next 6 months.
- Your child may sleep about 13 hours each day. Consistent bedtimes are best.
- Continue your regular nighttime routine: bath, brushing teeth and reading.

Safety

- 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. Ideally 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.
- Car seat straps should fit snugly against your baby.
- Layer blankets or car seat covers over your baby as needed for warmth. Snowsuits are not necessary.

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- Be a good role model for your child. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Falls at this age are common. Keep gates on all stairways and doors to dangerous areas.
- 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 baby swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program the number into your phone.
- Use safety catches on drawers and cupboards. Cover electrical outlets with plastic covers.
- Use sunscreen with a SPF of more than 15 when your child is outside.
- Keep the crib mattress at the lowest setting. It's time to move your child to a toddler bed when he or she tries to climb out of the crib.
- Teach your child to wash his or her hands and face often. This is important before eating and drinking.
- Always put a helmet on your child if he or she rides in a bicycle carrier or behind you on a bike.
- Never leave your child alone in the bathtub or near water.
- Do not leave your child alone in the car, even if he or she is asleep.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend any screen time (except for video-chatting) for children younger than 18 months.
- 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 your child about sharing. Just know that he or she may not be ready for this.
- Teach and praise positive behaviors. Distract and prevent negative or dangerous behaviors.
- Ignore temper tantrums. Make sure the toddler is safe during the tantrum. Or, you may hold your toddler gently, but firmly.
- **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.
- 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 or earlier if there are questions or concerns. (Your child may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)
- Using bottles increases the risk for cavities and ear infections.
- Brush your child's teeth one to two 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.

What Your Child Needs

- Read to your child often. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. 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.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive these shots at this time:

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- VAR (varicella)
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type B)
- PCV13 (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, 13-valent): need one supplemental dose between 15 months and age 5
- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information on 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 18 months.

Due to the immunizations your child may receive, his or her next visit must be no earlier than the day he or she turns 18 months.

Your child may need these shots:

- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
- HepA (hepatitis A)
- influenza.

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