

Health and Wellness: 18 Months

Development

At this age, your child may:

- walk fast, run stiffly, walk backwards and walk up stairs with one hand held
- sit in a small chair and climb into an adult chair
- kick and throw a ball
- stack three or four blocks and put rings on a cone
- turn single pages in a book or magazine, look at pictures and name some objects
- speak four to 10 words, combine two-word phrases, understand and follow simple directions, speak two or more wants or needs and point to a body part when asked
- pull a toy
- imitate a crayon stroke on paper
- feed himself or herself, use a spoon and hold and drink from a sippy cup fairly well
- use a household toy (like a toy telephone) well.

Feeding Tips

- Your child's food likes and dislikes may change. Do not make mealtimes a battle. Give your child a good example with your own food choices.
- Offer your child a variety of healthful foods. Your child should decide how much he or she eats.

- To see if your child has a healthful diet, look at a 4 or 5 day span to see if he or she is eating a good balance of foods from the food groups.
- Limit sweets and fast foods.
- Do not offer food as rewards.
- Your child does not need juice.
- Teach your child to wash his or her hands and face often. This is important before eating and drinking.
- 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

- Your child may show interest in potty training. Signs he or she may be ready include dry naps, use of words like "pee pee," "wee wee" or "poo," grunting and straining after meals, realizing the need to go, going to the potty alone and undressing.
- For most children, this interest in toilet training happens between the ages of 2 and 3.

Sleep

- Your child's nap schedule may vary from no naps to two naps each day. If your child does not nap, you may want to start a "quiet time." Be sure to use this time for yourself!
- Your child may have night fears. Using a night light or opening the bedroom door may help calm fears.

(over)

- Choose calm activities before bedtime. A consistent bedtime is 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.
- 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 baby 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.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that if you want to introduce screen time to your child, choose high-quality programs and watch them with your child.

What Your Child Needs

- Your child may become stubborn and possessive. Do not expect him or her to share toys with other children.

- Give your child strong toys that can pull apart, be put together or be used to build. Stay away from toys with small or sharp parts.
- Your child may become interested in exploring your home. If possible, let him or her play with pots, pans and plastic dishes or "help" with simple chores like sweeping.
- Make sure your child is getting consistent discipline at home and at daycare. Talk with your daycare provider if this isn't the case.
- Praise your child for positive, appropriate behavior. Your child does not understand danger or remember the word "no." Distract or prevent your child from getting into dangerous or negative behavior.
- Ignore temper tantrums. Make sure your child is in a safe place during a tantrum, or hold him or her firmly 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive these shots at this time:

- 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.

Your Child's Next Well Checkup

Your child's next well checkup will be at age 2.

Your child may receive this shot at this time:

- influenza.

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