

18 month Check-up

Normal Development Your child may...

Social:

- Laugh in response to others
- Explore alone but with parent in close proximity
- Be spontaneous with affection
- Helps around the house

Language/Communication:

- Vocalizes and gestures; speaks 6 words
- Points to indicate to someone else what he wants

Cognitive:

- Point to 1 body part
- Follow simple instructions without gestured cues (“sit down”)
- Show interest in a doll or stuffed animal by hugging it or pretend feeding
- Know the names of his favorite books

Motor:

- Walk up steps, run
- Stack 2 or 3 blocks
- Imitate a crayon stroke and scribbles
- Use a spoon and cup without spilling most of the time

Sleep

- Continue to put your child to bed at the same time each night. Maintaining a consistent bedtime routine, in the room where your child will be sleeping, will help prepare him for bedtime.
- An 18 month old sleeps about 12 to 14 hours a day, typically 10 hours overnight and 2-3 hours of napping. Sometime between 1 and 2 years old, children go from two naps a day to one.
- Some children at this age, even though they have been sleeping well, may go through a short period of night waking. If he awakens, do not give him enjoyable attention; a brief visit with reassurance from you is all that is needed for him to return to sleep. Provide your child with a stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite toy that he can use to help console himself at bedtime, should he wake.
- Do not give him a bottle to sleep with, or bring him into bed with you as a means to get him back to sleep.

Diet

- Although the toddler's level of activity increases significantly during this period, his rate of weight gain decreases, and struggles over eating arise for many parents.
- A toddler frequently eats a large amount at one meal and very little at the next. However, hunger guides him and he eats a sufficient amount over time. The key is to offer nutritious foods consistently and not worry about whether all the food is finished each time.
- Let your toddler decide what and how much to eat from an assortment of nutritious foods you offer. Trust your child's ability to know when she is hungry and full. If she asks for more, provide a small, additional portion. If she stops eating, accept her decision.
- Your toddler may become more suspicious of new or strange foods, but do not limit the menu to foods she likes.
- You may have to offer your toddler a new food several times before she accepts it. Do not give up after one or 2 tries.
- Let your toddler experiment with a variety of foods from each food group by touching and mouthing them.

Toilet Training

- The average age for a child to be toilet trained during the day is 30 months
- Wait to start toilet training until your toddler is dry for periods of about 2 hours, knows the difference between wet and dry, can pull his pants up and down, wants to learn, and can indicate when he is about to have a bowel movement.
- It is helpful to read books with your child about using the potty, to take him into the bathroom with the appropriate-sex parent or older sibling to learn the routine, and to praise attempts to sit on the potty with his clothes on.
- Many children enjoy a special trip to select “big kid” underwear for when they feel ready to stop using diapers during the day.

Stimulation

- Keep family outings relatively short and simple. Lengthy activities tire your toddler and may lead to irritability or a temper tantrum.
- Spend individual time with each child in your family.
- Encourage your toddler's language development by reading and singing to her, and by talking about what you both are seeing and doing together.
- Books do not have to be "read." Talk about the pictures or use simple words to describe what is happening in the book. Do not be surprised if she wants to hear the same book over and over. You may want to read books about feelings or about new changes that may be happening in your family i.e. a new sibling.

Discipline

- Redirection and positive attention for good behavior with consistent limits (even between caretakers) is key to surviving your child's new found independence.
- Acknowledge conflicts between siblings. Whenever possible, attempt to resolve conflicts without taking sides. For example, if a conflict arises about a toy, the toy can be put away. Do not expect your toddler to share her toys.
- Allow older children to have toys and other objects that they do not have to share with the toddler. Give them a storage space that the toddler cannot reach.
- Do not allow hitting, biting, or other aggressive behavior. Brief time-outs are a good way to tell your toddler these behaviors are not appropriate.

Safety

- Do not leave heavy objects or containers of hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that your child might pull down.
- Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove. Keep your child away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters.
- Make sure you have a working smoke detector on every level of your home, especially in the furnace and sleeping areas. Test smoke detectors every month. It is best to use smoke detectors that use long-life batteries, but, if you do not, change the batteries at least once a year.
- Remove poisons and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications and lock them away as well.
- Never refer to medicine as candy. Because children like to mimic what you do, do not take your medicine in front of your child.
- Keep the Poison Control Center number handy 1-800-222-1222. Do not make your child vomit.
- Install stair gates. To prevent children from falling out of windows, keep furniture away from windows and install operable window guards on second- and higher-story windows.
- Watch your toddler constantly whenever she is near water. A supervising adult should be within an arm's reach, providing "touch supervision," whenever young children are in or around water.
- Empty buckets, tubs, or small pools immediately after you use them.
- Be sure that swimming pools in your community, apartment complex, or home have a 4-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- The best way to keep your child safe from injury or death from guns is to never have a gun in the home.
- If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, it should be stored unloaded and locked, with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- In the car, make sure everyone wears a safety belt. Your child's car seat should continue to be rear-facing in the back seat until your child is 2 years old or has reached the maximum weight or height requirements specified by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Health Maintenance

- Immunizations- See immunization handout.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Please go to www.vapg.com and click on "Medicine Dosages" for correct dose of tylenol.
- Your baby's next check up is at 2 years age.