



## 18-MONTH VISIT

### NUTRITION

- Serve whole milk until 2 years of age.
- 3-4 servings of dairy foods are recommended every day for calcium needs.
- Feed your toddler a complete variety of table foods and aim to keep him/her on an “adult-type” schedule (3 meals a day + 2-3 healthy snacks).
- Avoid fast foods & junk foods (soda, candy, chips, etc.).
- No vitamins are needed unless prescribed by a health care provider.
- Variable diet and appetites are normal for 18-month-olds. Avoid fighting about food and don’t force your child to eat. Continue to offer healthy foods and look for variety among the food groups over one week’s time.
- Continue to avoid foods that can cause choking (hot dogs, nuts, popcorn, whole grapes, carrot sticks, raisins, whole beans, and hard candy).
- Your child should be drinking from a cup now. If your child is still on the bottle it must be discontinued to avoid dental cavities.
- Juice is not recommended. If given, dilute with water and limit to 4-6 oz per day.

### DEVELOPMENT

18-month-olds are amazing! They can walk, run, and jump (kind of)! Language varies between children at this age. Many can say at least 3-6 words, point to various body parts and understand simple commands. They can stack two blocks together and let you know what they want by pointing, pulling, or grunting. Big, bangle, safe toys that can be manipulated are good for this age group. Keep reading with your toddler every day – this will stimulate language development.

### SAFETY

- When giving liquid medicine, always use the dropper or syringe that comes with medication. If medication does not come with a dosing device, ask your pharmacist for one that should be used. Never use teaspoons, tablespoons, or other spoons to measure medicine.
- Toddlers should continue riding in rear-facing car seats in the backseat of the car until age 2, or until they reach the maximum height and weight for their seat. Once they reach the maximum height and weight for their seat, they can transition to a forward-facing car seat with harness. They should continue to ride in the backseat of the car.
- Child-proof your home. Pay special attention to knives, cigarettes, alcohol, matches, poisons, medications, outlets, cords, guns, and plastic bags.

- Supervise very closely, especially around animals, driveways, streets and water.
- Check for hazards at your toddler’s level & put up gates and window guards.
- Make sure your toddler’s crib mattress is at lowest level so that he/she cannot easily climb out of the crib.
- Maintain a smoke-free environment for your child.
- Make sure you have a working smoke detector and a CO2 monitor in your home.
- Plants should be out of reach – some are poisonous.
- Apply sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) 30 minutes prior to exposure and reapply every 1 ½ - 2 hours. Protective clothing and hats should be used in addition to sunscreen when outdoors.
- It’s OK to use an insect repellent with up to 30% DEET, but apply it sparingly.
- Do NOT use combination sunscreen/bug spray, as sunscreen must be applied more often than is safe to use bug spray.
- Know your poison control number: **1.800.222.1222**

### OTHER TIPS

- Children between 18 – 24 months should not view media on their own. If parents want to use media (TV, DVDs, computer/mobile applications) with their child, use should be limited to 1 hour or less of high-quality programming (PBS Kids, Sesame Workshop, etc.). All media should be avoided during meals and one hour before bedtime.
- Brush your child’s teeth twice daily. Your child should be seeing a pediatric dentist and receiving fluoride applications regularly now.
- Get rid of pacifiers and replace with another comfort object, such as a stuffed animal or blanket.
- Allow no hitting, biting, or aggressive behavior. Be consistent with discipline. Use distraction or redirection, or a very short Time Out (1-2 minutes).
- Temper tantrums may begin at this age. Try to ignore tantrums as long as your child is safe.
- Expect curiosity about genitals.

## **SLEEP**

Maintain a daily sleep schedule and consistent bedtime routine with your child. Most toddlers require a total of 12 to 14 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period, and take 1 to 2 naps a day.

## **TOILET LEARNING**

Most pediatricians recommend delaying potty training until at least 2 years of age. Parents in earlier generations used to try to train much earlier (12-18 months). The main reasons for this were hygiene, laundry, and public health issues. Some of the

skills needed to master potty training are: (1) the ability to identify the feeling of having to go, (2) the ability to identify and name the items involved (e.g., pee-pee and poop), and (3) the ability to pull the pants up and down. At 18 months, parents can gently start teaching the skills needed. Start reading books, talk about how everybody does it (mom, dad, dogs, cats, etc.). If you push too early, resistance is common. Resistance turns a happy developmental learning experience into a year-long nightmare that can result in severe constipation and unnecessary power struggles. Relax – your child will learn to use the toilet. Just wait and see!

**Next Well Care Visit: 2 Years of Age** (Please complete ASQ Developmental Screening and MCHAT Autism Screening prior to visit)

You may request the 2-Year Ages & Stages Developmental Questionnaire when scheduling your appointment. The MCHAT Autism Screening Questionnaire may be downloaded from the “Forms” page of our website under “Child Development.”

**APA Website: [www.advancedpediatricassociates.com](http://www.advancedpediatricassociates.com) | APA Patient Care Line: 303.699.6200**