

Well Child Care at 15 Months

Nutrition

Toddlers should eat small portions from all food groups: meats, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and cereals and grains. Your child should be learning to feed himself. He will use his fingers and maybe start using a spoon. This will be messy. Make sure you cut food into small pieces so that your child won't choke. Children need healthy snacks like cheese, fruit, and vegetables. Do not use food as a reward.

By now, most toddlers should be using a cup only. If your child is still using a bottle, it will soon start to cause problems with his teeth and might cause ear infections. A child at this age will be sad to give up a bottle, so try to replace it with another treasured item - perhaps a teddy bear or blanket. Never let a baby take a bottle to bed.

Development

Toddlers are very curious and want to be the boss. This is normal. If they are safe, this is a time to let your child explore new things. As long as you are there to protect your child, let him satisfy his curiosity. Stuffed animals, toys for pounding, pots, pans, measuring cups, empty boxes, and Nerf balls are some examples of toys your child may enjoy.

Toddlers may want to imitate what you are doing. Sweeping, dusting, or washing play dishes can be fun for children.

Behavior Control

Toddlers start to have temper tantrums at about this age. You need patience. Trying to reason with or punish your child may actually make the tantrum last longer. It is best to make sure your toddler is in a safe place and then ignore the tantrum. You can best ignore by not looking directly at him and not speaking to him or about him to others when he can hear what you are saying. At a later time, find things that are praiseworthy about your child. Let him know that you notice good qualities and behaviors. It is not yet time to start time-outs. You can start time-outs when the child is about 2 years of age. You may need to start earlier if your child has serious misbehavior, such as hitting.

Reading and Electronic Media

Reading to your child should be a part of every day. Children that have books read to them learn more quickly. Choose books with interesting pictures and colors. Children at this age may ask to read the same book over and over. This repetition is a natural part of learning.

It is best if children under 2 years of age do not watch television.

Dental Care

After meals and before bedtime, clean your toddler's teeth.

You may want to make an appointment for your child to see the dentist for the first time.

Safety Tips

Choking and Suffocation

- Keep plastic bags, balloons, and small hard objects out of reach.

- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.
- Cut foods into small pieces. Avoid foods on which a child might choke (popcorn, peanuts, hot dogs, chewing gum).

Fires and Burns

- Keep lighters and matches out of reach.
- Don't let your child play near the stove.
- Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.
- Turn the water heater down to 120°F (49°C).

Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in the car.
- Use an approved toddler car seat correctly and wear your seat belt.

Pedestrian Safety

- Hold onto your child when you are around traffic.
- Supervise outside play areas.

Water Safety

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone — NEVER.
- Continuously watch your child around any water, including toilets and buckets. Keep lids of toilets down. Never leave water in an unattended bucket. Store buckets upside down.

Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and other chemicals locked away.
- Put the poison center number on all phones.
- Buy medicines in containers with safety caps.
- Do not store poisons in drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Ask your healthcare provider for help in quitting. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.

Immunizations

At the 15-month visit, your child may receive shots.

Children over 6 months of age should receive an annual flu shot. Children during the first two years of life should get a total of three flu shots. Ask your healthcare provider about influenza shots if you have questions about them.

Your child may run a fever and be irritable for about 1 day and may have soreness, redness, and swelling in the area where the shots were given. You may give acetaminophen drops in the appropriate dose to prevent fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed to provide comfort.

Call your child's healthcare provider if:

- Your child has a rash or any reaction to the shots other than fever and mild irritability.
- Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

A small number of children get a rash and fever 7 to 14 days after the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) or the varicella vaccines. The rash is usually on the main body area and lasts 2 to 3 days. Call your healthcare provider within 24 hours if the rash lasts more than

3 days or gets itchy. Call your child's provider **immediately** if the rash changes to purple spots.

Next Visit

Your child's next visit should be at the age of 18 months. Bring your child's shot card to all visits.

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