

Mendon Pediatrics

15 Month Visit

Next Visit: 18 Months

Nutrition

- Eat meals as a family. Our children learn by watching us, so be a model of good eating habits.
- Allow toddlers to self-feed and drink from a cup, not a bottle. Chronic bottle use can cause tooth decay.
- Provide a variety of healthy food choices, allow experimentation and do not force eating. Respect your child's ability to know when he/she is not hungry.
- Offer three meals and 2-3 nutritious snacks daily at regular times. Avoid foods that cause choking, such as nuts, popcorn, hard candies, hard raw vegetables and fruits. Limit sugar intake.

Oral Health

- Brush teeth after meals and bedtime.
- Water should be fluoridated. If it isn't, ask about supplemental fluoride.
- Your toddler should be weaned off of bottles by this time.

Healthy Habits

- This is the age of developing autonomy and independence. Toddlers experiment with new powers as they learn the rules.
- Encourage language development. Talk, sing songs, and read interactively.
- Limit TV to no more than 1 hour per day. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV watching for children under 2 years old. Instead, playtime should be filled with interactive games, songs and reading.
- Give individual attention and create opportunities for exploration and physical activity. Encourage playing alone as well as with siblings, playmates and parents.
- Limit number of rules, but consistently enforce them. Define "boundaries." Allow no hitting, biting or aggressive behavior. Do not expect toddlers to share all toys.
- Time Out can be done and limited to one minute at this age. It should be related to the deed as a "logical consequence". Keep discipline brief and offer reassurance once the negative behavior has stopped.
- Overwhelm your toddler with more positive reinforcement than negative. This is the only way they learn what is allowable behavior.
- Toddlers are acquiring many new skills and this can be very frustrating, resulting in temper tantrums. Recognize warning signs of a developing meltdown and try to redirect attention and encourage self-quieting strategies. Use comfort objects such as a stuffed animal or blanket.
- Encourage self-care, self-expression and choices within the toddler's ability.
- Most children are not ready for toilet training at this age. Let your child direct his/her course at this age. Expect natural curiosity about genitals.
- Help your toddler express feelings: joy, anger, frustration, sadness and fear. Feelings are neither good or bad, right or wrong; they are real and they exist. Show affection.
- Serve as a role model for healthy habits.

Sleep

- Establish a regular bedtime routine and encourage your child to fall asleep on his/her own. Recognize that each child has different sleep requirements.

Injury and Illness Prevention

- Check for hazards at toddler's walking level.
- Re-examine the home to ensure it is child proof: locked medicine cabinet, kitchen and bathroom cabinet latches, window and stair guards, heating element precautions and garage safety devices.
- Make sure that the poison control number **1-800-222-1222** is in any location where your child spends much time. Always call the poison control first about any questions about ingestions.
- Use toddler car seat in the vehicle's rear seat. The center is the safest.
- Check home water temperature. It should be on the lowest setting, below 120 degrees.
- Avoid burns by keeping your toddler out of kitchen while cooking or out of the room while ironing clothes.
- The crib mattress should be on the lowest setting. If your child is climbing out, it may be safer to move him/her into a toddler bed.
- Ensure water safety around swimming pools, hot tubs, spas and bathtubs.
- Maintain a smoke free environment.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; check fire extinguishers.
- Begin teaching your child to use a bike helmet.
- Use sunblock of SPF 15 or higher. Avoid peak times (10am-3pm) in the sun.
- Insect repellent should contain less than 30% DEET.
- Supervise closely--especially near dogs, lawnmowers, driveways and streets.
- Be sure that any guns in the home are securely locked and stored separately from the ammunition. Gun safety locks should be in place on every gun.

Developmental Milestones: Over the next couple of months your child will start to:

- Walk well, then run.
- Bend over and pick up an object.
- Kick a ball.
- Use 1-2 words.
- Drink from a cup.
- Scribble.
- Point to a desired object.
- Begin to use a spoon and fork.
- "Feed" a doll.

Appropriate toys and activities

- Board books with large pictures, simple stories.
- Nesting toys.
- Beginner's jigsaw puzzles.
- Toys that encourage make-believe play (child lawn mower, kitchen sets, broom)
- Digging toys (bucket, shovel, rake)
- Toy telephone.
- Wooden spoons, old magazines, baskets, cardboard boxes and tubes, other similar safe, unbreakable items he/she "finds" around the house (such as Tupperware or pots and pans).

Suggested Reading

What to Expect the Toddler Years, A.Eisenberg

Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development, T.B. Brazelton

Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems, R.Ferber

Guide to Your Child's Symptoms, American Academy of Pediatrics

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5, American Academy of Pediatrics

Sleeping Through the Night, Jodi Mindell, Ph.D

Raising Your Spirited Child, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka

Guide to Your Child's Symptoms, American Academy of Pediatrics

Toilet Learning, A.Mack

Developmental Evaluations

The Early Intervention system is available for all children under age 3 for evaluation and treatment of motor and speech delays at no cost to the patient. Evaluations can be scheduled through your county:

Ontario County 396-4439 Livingston County 243-7299 Monroe County 753-5437

*This is the age of exploration. Allow your child to discover the world safely.
Catch them being good!*