

# *Mendon Pediatrics*

## 18 Month Visit

Next Visit: 2 Years

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### 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.
- Allow your toddler to "help out" around the house with chores such as washing dishes or sweeping the floor. At this age, they love to imitate adult activities.
- Limit the 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 emotional expressions.

## 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 door 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--should be on lowest setting, below 120 degrees.
- Lower crib mattress. If your child is climbing out of the crib, consider moving him/her into a toddler bed.
- Ensure water safety around swimming pools, hot tubs, spas and bathtubs.
- Maintain a smoke free environment.
- Begin teaching your child to use a bike helmet.
- Use sunblock with an SPF of 15 or higher. Avoid peak times (10am-3pm) in the sun.
- Avoid burns by keeping your child out of the kitchen while cooking and out of the room while ironing.
- 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 up steps.
- Use 6 words, which explodes to 50+ single words.
- Use fork and spoon.
- Name 6 body parts.
- Throw ball overhand.
- Follow a 2-step command without gestures.

## Appropriate toys and activities

- Beginner's jigsaw puzzles.
- Toys that encourage make-believe play (kitchen sets, child lawn mower)
- Unbreakable containers of all shapes and sizes.
- Outdoor toys (slides, swings, sandbox)
- Beginner's tricycle.
- Connecting toys (links, large stringing beads, S-shapes)
- Large crayons.
- Dress-up clothes.

## 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!*