

18 month old check-up



Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHILD

PARENTING

- Your child wants and needs your love and your praise. Hug him, and tell him that you love him often. Tell him when he does something that pleases you. Thank him when he does something nice.
- Your child may begin refusing to do what you want him to do. He may act stubborn and defiant at times. He is learning to be independent.
- Discipline means teaching, not punishing. Your child is learning to behave. When he does something that he should not do, try one of these:
 - Pick him up, and remove him from what he is doing.
 - Distract him with something else. This works well at this age.
 - Take the item away from him that you do not want him to have.
 - If he continues, place him in his crib or playpen for 1 minute, and walk away. Be sure he does not have his usual toys to play with. After 1 minute, take him out, and try again. Be sure to only leave him for 1 minute at a time.
 - Be calm, but be firm and say “no”.
- Ignore temper tantrums when you can. This is usually the best way to get them to stop.
- Be sure to check out the background of caregivers you do not know.

DEVELOPMENT

- Your child is learning to:
 - Walk up steps holding your hand. Learn how to go down steps sitting on his bottom.
 - Say more words each week. As you talk with him, point to an object, and say the word for him to learn.
 - Begin telling you that his diaper is wet or messed. He may want to watch you and other family members use the toilet. He is not ready for toilet training yet, but this is the first step.
- Your child may like:
 - Exploring places and things and being “on the go” all the time. Give him a safe place to play.
 - Playing outside on nice days.
- Spend time playing with your child.
 - Begin teaching him how to share and take turns. He may not be able to do this yet, but he can begin learning.
 - Buy toys that help him to use his imagination, think and learn.
 - Make sure that your child's play area is safe. Do not allow him to play near or in the street.
 - Watch him carefully when he uses riding toys or climbs in the playground.
- Read to your child every day. Point to things, and tell him their names. This helps him to learn new words. Avoid “baby talk”.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

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SAFETY

- Crib and changing table
 - Make sure your crib slats are no more than 2 ⅜ inches apart.
 - Make sure the crib rails do not move up and down. If you have an older crib, check with its maker to see if they have special parts to keep the side from moving.
 - Keep the mattress in the lowest position.
 - Never leave him alone on a high place, such as a bed, couch, chair or changing table. Keep one hand on him at all times while changing him.
 - Remove drapes and blind cords from your child's reach. This helps prevent choking and suffocation.
 - Move the crib away from windows and screens.
- Home
 - If you live in an older home, have it tested for lead.
 - Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Change the batteries twice a year.
 - Have a fire escape plan for your family, and practice it often.
 - Continue to "child-proof" your home. To help keep your child safe:
 - Teach your child how to go up and down the stairs safely. When you feel he is safe, remove the stair gates
 - Lock windows and screens. On upper floors, install safety bars that can keep your child from falling out the window but can be removed in case of a fire.
 - Put plug covers on electric outlets. Keep hot objects like irons, coffee pots and space heaters away from your child.
 - Keep all electric cords up and out of the way where your child cannot reach them. This includes items like your cell phone charger.
 - Put childproof locks on drawers and cabinets that contain harmful items, such as cleaning supplies, medicines and matches.
 - Put a lock on the toilet seat.
 - Furniture, shelves, TVs and ranges can tip over and hurt your child. Secure them to the floor or the wall, or use anti-tip brackets as needed.
 - Keep small toys and objects that he could choke on out of reach.
 - Keep plastic bags, ropes and strings, hot items and sharp objects out of reach.
 - Use back burners of the stove for cooking, and place pot handles towards the rear. Put knob covers on the stove and an oven lock on the oven door.
 - Do not let your child play near the stove or next to you when you are cooking.
 - Keep him away from the fireplace and other hot items.
 - Pad sharp corners of furniture or the fireplace.
 - Lock up guns and bullets.
 - Store knives, scissors, razors and other sharp items in a safe place.
- Car
 - Make sure your child rides in a car safety seat every time you go driving, no matter how short the trip.
 - Place the car seat in the back seat, facing towards the rear window. Your child should ride like this as long as possible. Do not turn him forward-facing until he is at least 2 years old. Make sure the car seat is installed correctly. The seat should be at a 45 degree angle.
 - Do not add anything, such as blankets or harness strap covers, to your child or the seat unless it is approved by the car seat maker.

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- Wear your seatbelt, too.
- Smoking
 - Keep your child away from cigarette smoke. Breathing in second-hand smoke can cause asthma, ear infections and other breathing problems.
- CPR
 - Take a child CPR course. Call the Red Cross, American Heart Association or a local hospital for more information.
- Outdoors
 - Use a sunscreen that is safe for babies and toddlers.
 - Put shoes on your child when outdoors, even in the grass.
 - Make sure he wears a bike helmet if he rides on a bike carrier with you.
 - Make sure he cannot get near pools or spas by himself. If you have one in your yard, install a proper safety fence around it.

A FEW NEVER, EVER's –

To help keep your child safe - **NEVER:**

- Leave him alone except in a crib or playpen. Stay nearby so you can hear him, or use a baby monitor.
- Shake your child.
- Leave your child alone in a car.
- Hold him in your lap while riding in the car.
- Leave your child alone in a sink or bathtub – not even to answer the door or phone or get a towel.
- Allow your child to wear necklaces, straps or backpacks on the playground or during sleep. These items can cause choking.

BATHING

- Always test your child's bath water to make sure it is warm but not too hot. Set your water heater at 120°F or lower. Ask your landlord to do this if you live in an apartment.
- Brush his teeth with a small, soft toothbrush and a smear of non-fluoride toothpaste each night before bedtime. Let him start to use a toothbrush with plain water to brush his teeth.

FEEDING

- Feed your child table food, and feed him at the table with the rest of the family.
- Turn off the TV and cell phones during meal time. Make meal time family time, and keep meal time pleasant.
- Share news of the day, and talk together. Focus on family news and not on what or how much your child is eating.
- Stick to scheduled meal times and 1 to 2 snacks.
- Your child's doctor may also advise that you give him a multivitamin each day.

Meals

- Your child needs food from all food groups:
 - Lean meat, eggs, beans and cheese for protein
 - Fruits and vegetables for fiber, vitamins and minerals

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- Whole grains, such as cereal, pasta and whole grain bread for fiber, vitamins and minerals. At least half of the grains he eats should be whole grains.
- Dairy foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt for calcium. His dairy should be whole milk, full fat.
- Allow your child to choose how much to eat, and do not scold or nag him about what he is eating or not eating.
- Do not give him foods that he can choke on like:
 - Chunks of meat and cheese, such as hot dogs and string cheese
 - Raw fruits and vegetables, such as grapes, apple pieces and carrots
 - Popcorn, nuts, peanut butter, gum and hard, gooey candy
- Give him only 1 new food at a time, and wait a few days before giving him another new food. This allows you to tell if he is allergic to a food or if it bothers him in any way.
 - Some common foods that babies may be allergic to include things like peanut butter, eggs and seafood.
- Your child can help to feed himself now. He will be messy, but allow him to do this. Give him food choices when you can so that he gets to pick his favorites sometimes.
- Your child may eat less now. He knows how much he needs to keep him from being hungry.

Snacks

- Serve healthy snacks, such as yogurt, cheese and soft fruits. Avoid foods and drinks with lots of sugar, such as desserts, candy, sweetened cereals, sweet tea and soda.

Drinks

- Give your child water in a cup. Give water instead of sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks and sweet tea.
- Also give your child whole milk, full fat until he is 2 years old.

SLEEP

- Have a regular bedtime and routine for your child. This is one more way that you can help him feel more secure.
- Read to him each night before he goes to sleep.
- Your child may take a nap each day.

HEALTHY HABITS

You can help keep your child and your family healthy when you:

- Wash your hands often during the day. Teach your child and other family members to wash their hands often, too. Use warm water and soap and scrub for 20 seconds.
- Make sure he gets needed vaccines to help prevent disease.
- Take your child to the dentist for regular check-ups.

Your child learns through play. Avoid screen time until he is 2 years old. Some examples of screen time are:

- TV
- Computers
- Videogames
- Tablet devices
- Smart phones

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Avoid giving fruit juice to your child. It often has extra sugar he does not need. Try giving him small pieces of whole fruit instead. If you do give him juice, only give your child 4 to 6 ounces a day. Dilute it so it is 1/2 water and 1/2 juice. Let him sip from a cup. Give him sips of water from a cup, too.

Whether inside or outside, give your child the chance to be active every day. Active play is good for all children.

IF YOUR CHILD EVER SEEMS ILL

If your child feels too warm or seems ill, check his temperature with a thermometer.

- Call the doctor if he has a temperature **over 102.2°F or 39°C**, seems ill or you have any concerns.
- For toddlers less than 2 years old – take the temperature in the rectum (opening in the bottom where the bowel movement or stool comes out). Other methods are not as accurate in babies.
- Talk with your child’s doctor about when to give fever medicines.

FOR YOUR CHILD’S NEXT VISIT - 2 years old

- You and your child’s doctor can talk about how things are going with your child.
- Your child will have a physical examination (check-up) that may include getting vaccines. You will have a chance to ask questions.
- You may want to talk about your child’s:
 - Feeding and sleeping
 - Safety
 - Development
 - Temper tantrums and discipline

THINGS FOR YOU TO DO

- Continue to child-proof your house. Make sure your child is safe by removing unsafe items that are within his reach.
- Keep a record of when your child is ill or hurt. Share this record with your child’s doctors.
- Make a list of questions to talk with your doctor about at the next visit.
- Bring your child’s shot (vaccine) record to your next visit.

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