

## Your 18-Month-Old Toddler

### Diet

- Offer a variety of healthy table foods, and try to eat together as a family. Allow your child to feed himself. This is an age for slower growth, so many toddlers have very sporadic appetites. Try to avoid struggles over food; your toddler knows how hungry he is. Think in terms of a week (not a day), when trying for a balanced and varied diet.
- You may have to offer a new food many times before it is accepted. Touching and tasting a new food indicates interest, even if very little is consumed.
- Continue to avoid foods that are choking hazards, such as popcorn, nuts, whole grapes, raisins, hard candies, hot dogs or large chunks of food.
- Your toddler should drink around 16–20 ounces of milk each day. Too much milk can lead to picky eating and iron-deficiency anemia. If your toddler won't drink milk, offer other calcium containing foods (yogurt, cheese, soy or almond milk, tofu, kale, broccoli).
- Your toddler should be using cups, not bottles. Prolonged bottle feeding is associated with tooth decay.
- Multivitamins may be recommended if your toddler's diet seems inadequate.

### Elimination

- Most toddlers are not ready for toilet training until at least 2 years. However, this is a good age to get a child-size potty seat and tell your child that he will use it someday.
- To help set the stage, there are many books written for toddlers about potty training.

### Sleep

- Continue your consistent bedtime routine. The average toddler sleeps through the night and takes 1–2 naps.
- Sleep disruptions may occur, especially with illness or travel. Try to re-establish your child's routine as soon as possible, once things are back to normal.

### Development

- Most 18-month-olds are able to say 5–15 words, point to body parts, climb, scribble, use utensils, talk on the phone, and walk well.
- Encourage your child's language development by reading books, singing songs, and keeping conversation going.
- Temper tantrums are common as toddlers develop independence. This is normal behavior, and may be more likely if your toddler is tired, sick or hungry.
- Toddlers are no longer easily distracted once they have their mind set on something. They need consistent discipline. This may include verbal reminders of rules and limits; you may also need to physically remove your toddler from dangerous situations if verbal reminders are ignored.
- Physical punishment is not recommended; children feel violated, hurt and angry when they are hit.
- Praise good behavior! Children learn better by being rewarded for good behavior than by being punished for bad behavior.

### Safety

- Car seats should face rear until your child is 2 years of age.
- Toddlers are busy and are excellent climbers! Lock cabinets and keep cleaners, medications, plastic bags, and small objects away from your toddler. Secure blind cords and install upper floor window gates. Erect wall mounted stair gates.
- Your toddler can drown in just a few inches of water. Supervise your toddler constantly, especially around water.
- Keep your toddler away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons and space heaters. Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- If you own a gun, store it unloaded and locked, in a separate location from ammunition (which should also be locked).
- In case of accidental ingestion or poisoning, call the Illinois Poison Center at 800.222.1222.
- Use a properly-fitted bicycle helmet if you take your toddler on a bike ride.
- Use sunscreen, SPF 30 or higher, hats and sunglasses.

## Fever/Illness

- Fever is a common symptom in children, usually caused by the immune system's response to an infection. Any temperature over 100.4° F is considered a fever. Once you've identified a fever, you can treat it with acetaminophen or ibuprofen to make your child more comfortable. Depending on other symptoms, it may be necessary to come to the office, although most fevers are caused by viruses and can be managed at home.
- More important than the number on the thermometer is how your child looks and acts. If your child is interactive after receiving fever medicine, that is a good sign.
- Please call our office to report fever that lasts more than 72 hours or is accompanied by other concerning symptoms (decreased drinking, decreased urine output, labored breathing, or looking very ill).
- Being prepared can help you cope with fever. Keep your thermometer handy, have acetaminophen or ibuprofen (and dosing information) available and take these with you when travelling.

## Prevention

- Brush your toddler's teeth twice a day. Use a soft toothbrush with water or a tiny smear of toothpaste. Teething gels are not recommended.
- A good resource for information about vaccines is: [vaccine.chop.edu/parents](http://vaccine.chop.edu/parents).
- A useful website for reliable information about a wide variety of pediatric health topics is [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org).

## Reaching us

If you have concerns, please do not hesitate to call the office to speak to a nurse. Nurses return calls throughout the day. You may also leave a non-emergent message for your doctor or nurse practitioner, who will return your call by the end of the day. For emergencies, a doctor is on call when the office is closed.

## Resources

- A good website to bookmark for future reference is [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org).
- We suggest having the Illinois Poison Control Center phone number handy: [800.222.1222](tel:800.222.1222).

## Today

- Your child will be vaccinated against Hepatitis A and may have other catch up vaccinations.
- You will be given two developmental questionnaires to complete at home and mail back to our office.

## At the 2-year check-up

- Your child may have a Hepatitis A vaccination.
- Your child may have another blood test to detect lead.
- Your toddler will have a physical examination and your questions and concerns will be answered.
- You will be given two developmental questionnaires to complete at home and mail back to our office.

### Acetaminophen Dosing Instructions

Every 4–6 hours and no more than 4 doses/day

Weight	Dose	Infant OR Children's suspension 160 mg/5 mL
18–23 lbs	120 mg	¾ tsp or 3.75 mL
24–35 lbs	160 mg	1 tsp or 5 mL

### Ibuprofen Dosing Instructions

Every 6–8 hours

Weight	Dose	Infant Drops 50 mg/1.25 mL	Children's suspension 100 mg/5 mL
18–23 lbs	75 mg	1.875 mL	¾ tsp or 3.75 mL
24–35 lbs	100 mg	2.5 mL	1 tsp or 5 mL