

## Your 2-Year-Old Toddler

### Diet

- Offer a variety of healthy table foods, and try to eat together as a family. Let your child feed himself with a utensil or fingers. Avoid struggles over food; your toddler knows how hungry he/she is. Think in terms of a week (not a day), when trying for a balanced and varied diet.
- Continue to avoid foods that are choking hazards, such as popcorn, nuts, whole grapes, raisins, hard candies, hot dogs or large chunks of food.
- Limit fatty or salty foods, sweets and juice. Avoid sticky fruit snacks!
- Your toddler should drink around 16–20 ounces per day of low-fat milk. Too much milk can lead to picky eating. If your child won't drink milk, offer other calcium-containing foods (yogurt, cheese, soy or almond milk, tofu, kale, broccoli).
- Multivitamins may be recommended if your toddler's diet seems inadequate.

### Elimination, Toilet Readiness

- Signs of readiness to use the potty or toilet are usually seen between 2–3 years of age.
- To successfully potty train, your toddler needs to know the difference between wet and dry, be able to pull clothing on and off, tell you when he needs to go and most importantly, want to be trained. If your child is not ready, don't worry; have the potty chair available, and be patient.
- If your child has infrequent, hard stools, this may interfere with toilet training. We can suggest dietary measures and/or a stool softener.

### Sleep

Toddlers do best with predictable routines, especially at bedtime. Most toddlers sleep through the night and take one nap. If your toddler resists napping, try for "quiet time" instead.

### Development

- Most 2-year-olds are able to put two words together, run, jump, throw a ball, dress and brush teeth with help, follow two-step commands and turn pages of a book.
- Your toddler's speech is probably becoming more intelligible; it should be about 50 percent understandable in context.
- Your toddler may be more interested in being around other children. Parallel play (observing and imitating others, but not playing in an interactive way) is typical at this age.

### Behavior/Discipline

- Most toddlers are striving for independence. You can respect this by offering choices (Do you want to wear the red or blue shirt?). Other times, when your toddler has no choice, be firm and clear about your parental decision.
- Praise good behavior; being rewarded for good behavior is more effective than being punished for bad behavior.
- Try time-outs for unacceptable behavior (hitting, biting, endangering himself or others). A minute per year of age is a good guideline.
- Try to limit television and electronics. Encourage the habit of exercise — walk, hike, bike, play tag.

## Safety

- Your child is ready to be taught simple rules about safety and behavior in the family, but is only beginning to be able to follow them. Ensure the safety of the environment for your toddler. Provide gentle reassurance, calmly and consistently maintain limits, and reinforce positive behaviors.
- Lock cabinets and keep cleaners, medications, plastic bags and small objects away from your toddler. Secure blind cords and use wall-mounted stair gates. Install upper floor window gates.
- Burns, falls, choking, drowning and poisoning are still the biggest hazards in your toddler's environment.
- 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. Don't forget to wear your own helmet!
- Use sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater, a hat 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

- Consider scheduling the first dental visit.
- Teach your child to brush his teeth twice a day, using a soft toothbrush and a small dab of toothpaste. Make sure you also brush the teeth.
- 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).

## Tests/Immunizations for today

- Hepatitis A vaccine and a blood test for lead are usually given. A tuberculosis skin test may be given.
- You will be given a developmental questionnaire to complete at home and mail back to our office.

## At the 2½-year check-up

- Your toddler will have a physical examination. Your questions and concerns will be answered.
- You will be given a developmental questionnaire 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   | Children's Suspension |
|-----------|--------|-----------------------|
| 24–35 lbs | 160 mg | 1 tsp or 5 mL         |

### Ibuprofen Dosing Instructions

Every 6–8 hours

| Weight    | Dose   | Children's Suspension |
|-----------|--------|-----------------------|
| 24–35 lbs | 100 mg | 1 tsp or 5 mL         |