

Your 2½-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, seeds, whole grapes, raisins, hard candies, hot dogs or large chunks of food.
- 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).
- Limit fatty or salty foods, sweets and juice. Avoid sticky fruit snacks.
- Multivitamins may be recommended if your toddler's diet seems inadequate.

Elimination and toilet training

- 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. It's best to delay toilet training until this problem has resolved.

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

- The main reason for a 2½-year checkup is to assess the development of language and social communication. Most 2½-year-olds are able to use short sentences of 3–4 words, with speech that is at least 50 percent intelligible. Continue to foster language development with books, songs and conversation.
- Most toddlers are also able to run, jump, kick a ball and identify some colors and shapes.
- This is a good age for pretend play with your toddler. Play hospital, zoo, store, barber shop, restaurant or airport with your child. Use puppets. These activities help build creativity and help your child with life situations. Children this age love to feed a dolly, talk on the phone, sweep the floor, clean the windows, etc. They love to help out around the house!

Behavior/Discipline

- At this age, a new sense of order emerges that may be repetitive and perfectionistic. Your toddler may insist on lining up toys, placing crayons in a specific order or always wearing the same pair of shoes. Most likely this is a passing phase!
- Play with peers continues to be more often parallel rather than collaborative. Play activities that have an easily recognized theme and sequence of actions (e.g., the tea party and tag) are great for getting 2½-year-olds to play together.
- Being rewarded for good behavior is more effective than being punished for bad behavior.
- Try time-outs for unacceptable behavior. A minute per year of age is a good guideline.

Safety

- Remember toddlers are very curious and can get into anything! Use locks on the toilets, cabinets and appliances.
- Burns, falls, choking, drowning and poisoning are the biggest hazards in your toddler's environment. Install upper floor window gates.
- 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 an age- and weight-appropriate life jacket whenever around water, and supervise constantly.
- Use sunscreen, SPF 30 or greater, and 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.
- A useful website for reliable information about a wide variety of pediatric health topics is healthychildren.org.

Tests/Immunizations for today

- Usually no vaccines are needed.
- You will be given a developmental questionnaire to complete at home and mail back to our office.

At the 3-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