

# Health and Wellness: 18 Months

## Development

At this age, your child may:

- walk fast, run stiffly, walk backwards and walk up stairs with one hand held
- sit in a small chair and climb into an adult chair
- kick and throw a ball
- stack three or four blocks and put rings on a cone
- turn single pages in a book or magazine, look at pictures and name some objects
- speak four to 10 words, combine two-word phrases, understand and follow simple directions, speak two or more wants or needs and point to a body part when asked
- pull a toy
- imitate a crayon stroke on paper
- feed himself or herself, use a spoon and hold and drink from a sippy cup fairly well
- use a household toy (like a toy telephone) well.

## Feeding Tips

- Your child's food likes and dislikes may change. Do not make mealtimes a battle. Your child may be stubborn, but he or she often copies your eating habits. This is not done on purpose. Give your child a good example and eat healthy every day.
- Offer your child a variety of foods.
- The amount of food your child should eat should average one "good" meal each day.
- To see if your child has a healthy diet, look at a four or five day span to see if he or she is eating a good balance of foods from the food groups.
- Your child may have an interest in sweets. Try to offer nutritional, naturally sweet foods such as fruit, fruit juices or dried fruits. Offer sweets no more than once each day. Offer them between lunch and dinner. Avoid offering sweets as a reward for completing a meal.

## Your child's growth:

### Weight:

\_\_\_\_\_ lbs. \_\_\_\_\_ oz. (\_\_\_\_\_ percent)

### Length:

\_\_\_\_\_ in. (\_\_\_\_\_ percent)

### Head circumference:

\_\_\_\_\_ cm / in.

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands and face often. This is important before eating and drinking.
- Brush your child's teeth one to two times each day with a soft-bristled toothbrush. You do not need to use toothpaste. If you do, use a very small amount. Let your child play with the toothbrush after brushing.

## Toilet Training

- Your child may show interest in potty training. Signs he or she may be ready include dry naps, use of words like "pee pee," "wee wee" or "poo," grunting and straining after meals, realizing the need to go, going to the potty alone and undressing. For most children, this interest in toilet training happens between the ages of 2 and 3.

## Sleep

- Your child's nap schedule may vary from no naps to two naps each day. If your child does not nap, you may want to start a "quiet time." Be sure to use this time for yourself!
- Your child may have night fears. Using a night light or opening the bedroom door may help calm fears.
- Choose calm activities before bedtime.
- Continue your regular nighttime routine: bath, brushing teeth and reading.



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## Safety

- Use an approved car seat every time your child rides in the car. Make sure the car seat is secured in the back seat, facing the rear window.
- Protect your child from falls, burns, drowning, choking and other accidents.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your child's reach. Call the poison control center or your health care provider for directions in case your baby swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone.
- Do not leave your child alone in the car or the house, even for a minute.

## What Your Child Needs

- Your child may become stubborn and possessive. Do not expect him or her to share toys with other children.
- Give your child strong toys that can pull apart, be put together or be used to build. Stay away from toys with small or sharp parts.
- Your child may become interested in what's in drawers, cabinets and wastebaskets. If possible, let him or her look through some drawers or cupboards. Let your child play with pots, pans and plastic dishes.
- Make sure your child is getting consistent discipline at home and at day care. Talk with your daycare provider if this isn't the case.
- Praise your child for positive, appropriate behavior. Your child does not understand danger or remember the word "no."
- Read to your child often.

## Dental Care

Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting when your child's first tooth appears. (Your child may need fluoride tablets if you have well water.)

## Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive these shots at this time:

- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis vaccine)
- Hep A (hepatitis A vaccine)
- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information on giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) after your child's immunizations.

## Your Child's Next Well Checkup

Your child's next well checkup will be at age 2.

Your child may receive this shot at this time:

- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information on giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before your child's next immunizations.