

15 Month Visit

NUTRITION

1. Encourage self-feeding of table foods and the use of utensils and a cup. Your child should be completely off the bottle at this age. Expect a decrease in milk intake. The family should try to have meals together.
2. Toddlers are typically picky eaters. Try not to get into meal time battles over food intake. Keep meal time as regular as possible. Non-sugary and unsalted snacks, such as fresh fruits, are preferable to candy and cookies. Filling up on snacks, juices, and milk between meals is the number one cause of poor appetite at meal time. Apple juice in particular is of virtually no nutritional value.
3. In a playful way, get your toddler into the habit of daily teeth brushing. Use only a scant amount of tooth paste. EXCESSIVE fluoride ingestions can be unhealthy.

DEVELOPMENT

1. Most toddlers are not ready for toilet training until at least 24 to 36 months old. Indications of readiness include: (a) general interest in putting things into containers, (b) awareness of when a bowel movement is coming or being passed, (c) often stays dry for several hours, urinating a good deal at one time, rather than dribbling through the day, (d) knows body parts, (e) able to understand and follow simple instructions. Praise your child if, on his own, he shows an interest; but it is wrong to express any disappointment or punish him if he just doesn't want to use the potty. Don't push it. Your child, with your help, will learn to accomplish this milestone, but only when they are developmentally capable. Things will be much easier for you and your child if you wait until they are really ready.
2. Remember that punishment does not teach. Give positive reinforcement ("What a big girl!") for good behaviors. Build your child's self-esteem by "catching him being good!" Try to give clear messages appropriate to your child's level of understanding.
3. If your child is still using a pacifier, slowly discontinue it. Start by making it unavailable during the daytime.
4. Limit television viewing! The AAP doesn't recommend viewing TV until age 2 years and then limited.
5. Expect temper tantrums. This is a normal expression of your child's developing autonomy; however, this is an inappropriate way for your child to get your attention. If you respond to tantrums with a lot of talk or even punishment, you will unintentionally reward this behavior. Your child will learn that he gets plenty of attention by throwing a fit. If, on the other hand, you completely and consistently ignore tantrums, you will effectively teach your child that this type of behavior is not worth continuing.

SAFETY

1. Remember the car safety seat every ride. One interesting study demonstrated that toddler's car behavior was much better in safety seats than out.
2. Prevent choking accidents by discouraging eating while walking or playing. Some foods are more dangerous than others. Avoid big hot dog pieces, nuts, popcorn, raisins, grapes, and other foods that are difficult for children to break down with their teeth. Plastic bags and uninflated balloons, which can be sucked down into the back of the throat, should be kept away from children.
3. Periodically re-check your entire house for poisons. Remember to keep the Poison Control Center emergency phone number 1-800-222-1222 posted. Never underestimate your child's ability to climb. Poisons, medications, or toxic household products should either be excluded from the home or kept locked up.

4. Guard against electrical injuries from cords and plugs.
5. Never leave your child unsupervised by the water! “Knowing how to swim” does not make a child water-safe at this age.
6. Never leave your child unattended with other young children or pets.
7. Lower the crib mattress. Some children will try to climb out at this age.
8. Active toddlers are at risk for burns and scalding. Set hot water thermostats at 120 degrees Fahrenheit maximum. Keep hot liquid out of reach during meal preparation. Do not carry the child and hot liquid at the same time. Beware of hot liquids on tablecloths that the child may pull down. Turn your pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep your child away from hot stoves, space heaters, wall heaters, irons, and fireplaces.
9. Firearms pose a serious threat to the safety of too many of our children of all ages. The best prevention measure is to not keep firearms at home at all. If firearms must be in the home, they must be stored unloaded, in a locked location. Ensure that firearms are also not accessible in other homes where your child may spend time, such as day care providers’, relatives’, and friends’ homes.