

Twelve Month Visit

NUTRITION

1. Your child should be eating the same table foods that you are. Be careful not to offer foods on which they might choke. You should develop the habit of not allowing them to eat when they are not seated to minimize the chance of choking. Meals should be with the family without distraction from TV. Eating should only occur in the kitchen/dining room.
2. At this age, your child should start to use the cup more than the bottle. During the first year of life many babies do have a need to suck. During the second year, however, sucking on a bottle or pacifier is more of a habit. Make your move to discontinue the bottle now. Children who free themselves from the bottle generally tend to have less difficulty with (a) developing good eating habits and a balanced diet, (b) learning to comfort themselves without a “crutch” and (c) dental problems. Apple juice is a bad habit. Juice, if any, should be limited to 2-4 ounces per day.
3. It is also time to switch your child over from formula to cow’s milk. Please ask your doctor about what type of milk is best for your child.
4. Anticipate that your child’s total food intake will decrease during the second year. Put out three meals each day and if there is not much between meal snacking or milk drinking, they will usually eat. Snacks should be at specific times. If they will not eat, don’t push it. No healthy child will let themselves starve. Do not let yourself get into battles about food intake over the dinner table; against a toddler, you will never win. The goal of mealtime should be to make it an enjoyable and relaxed family time and not to make your child meet a certain calorie quota.

DEVELOPMENT

1. During the next year, your child will steadily establish themselves as a little person. This can be both an exciting and difficult time for parents. View your child’s emerging independent behaviors as part of normal development rather than opposition to parents.
2. It is important to set clear limits on behavior. Always keep in mind the difference between punishment and discipline-teaching! Prohibitions should be few but firm. Because of your child’s growing independence, “no-no” may not work. They may simply have to be removed from what they are doing. Because of their inability to reason, explanations tend to go nowhere. As a rule, the more you talk to a toddler about an undesired behavior, the more they do it. Your attention to these behaviors is, to your child, something worth getting. Instead, get yourself into the habit of attending to and praising your child’s “desired” behaviors. Catch them being good! It is better to spend your day rewarding behaviors that you like instead of saying “no” after “no”. Discipline is one of the most difficult challenges of parenting. Consistency between parents and day care providers is very important.
3. Encourage speech development by naming pictures, body parts, and objects inside and out of the house. The importance of spending time together, reading and playing games cannot be over emphasized. Talk to your child while feeding, changing, bathing, dressing, and walking. Read to your child every day. No cell phone or computer videos except for skyping or facetimeing real people until at least 18 months of age.
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5. It is very difficult to parent effectively if you are exhausted and stressed. Take care of yourself. Take regular breaks to recharge your parenting batteries.

SAFETY

1. Remember the car safety seat! New recommendations now are to keep your child backwards for as long as possible. For information on the latest recommendations and considerations, please visit healthychildren.org and search for “Car Seat Safety”.
2. Poison-proof your entire house (consult our 9 month visit information sheet for details). Remember that the environment away from your home, such as babysitter’s and grandparent’s homes, and visitors to your home, who may carry medicines in purses, are potential sources of dangerous substances. It is no longer recommended to use or have Ipecac in your home.
3. As your child becomes increasingly mobile, you will need to pay even more attention to stair and water safety. Also keep him well away from running machinery, such as lawn mowers and backing cars. There should be a consistent and firm prohibition against playing near the street or going into the street without holding an adult’s hand. Provide a play area that prevents balls and riding toys from rolling into the street.
4. Store toys in a chest WITHOUT a dropping lid and an open area on the side for ventilation if your child climbs in.
5. Keep hot food and liquids out of reach. Put shock stops in unused electrical outlets. Put cords out of reach. Keep all electrical appliances out of the bathroom. Do not cook with your child at your feet. Use back burners on the stove with pan handles out of reach. Do not store items that attract a child above the stove. Do not allow your child to play with the stove, microwave, hot curlers, or iron. Keep matches and lighters out of reach. Make sure blinds have double cords with ends on each cord to prevent choking.
6. Remain in the room every second of a bath. Toilets and buckets of water can also be a source of danger and should not be accessible to toddlers.
7. Firearms can be a tragic threat to the safety of 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.
8. Do not give foods that can cause choking or might go down the windpipe, such as peanuts, hot dogs, popcorn, frozen peas, corn, beans, raw carrot sticks, celery sticks, and pieces of raw apple, grapes, raisins.

DENTAL CARE

It is now recommended that children start to see a dentist every 3-6 months after eruption of their first tooth for fluoride varnish treatments. If you do not know a good dentist who is geared toward children, we would be glad to recommend one. Start to brush your child’s teeth to get them used to it. You should use toothpaste with fluoride, but only a small amount (about the size of a grain of rice). Do not rinse with water afterwards.