

Well Child Care at 15 Months

Nutrition

Your child should be learning to feed himself. He will use his fingers and maybe start using a spoon. This will be messy. Make sure to cut the food up into small pieces so your child won't choke. Children need nutritious snacks like cheese, fruit, and vegetables. Do not use food as a reward.

By now, most toddlers should be using a cup only. If your child is still using a bottle, it may start to cause problems with his teeth and might cause ear infections. A child at this age will be sad to give up a bottle, so try to replace it with another treasured item - perhaps a teddy bear or blanket.

Development

Toddlers are very curious and want to be the boss. This is normal. If they are safe, this is a time to let your child explore new things. As long as you are there to protect your child, let him satisfy his curiosity. Stuffed animals, toys for pounding, pots, pans, measuring cups, empty boxes, and Nerf balls are some examples of toys your child may enjoy.

Toddlers start to have temper tantrums at about this age. Trying to reason with or punish your child may actually make the tantrum last longer. It is best to make sure your toddler is in a safe place and then ignore the tantrum. You can best ignore by not looking directly at him and not speaking to him or about him to others when he can hear what you are saying.

Toddlers may want to imitate what you are doing. Sweeping, dusting, or washing play dishes can be fun for children.

Reading to your child should be a part of every day. Children that have books read to them learn more quickly. Choose books with interesting pictures and colors.

Safety Tips

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Keep plastic bags, balloons, and small hard objects out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.

- Cut foods into small pieces. Avoid foods on which a child might choke (popcorn, peanuts, hot dogs, chewing gum).

Prevent Burns and Fires

- Keep lighters and matches out of reach.
- Don't let your child play near the stove.
- Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.
- Turn the water heater down to 120°F (49°C).

Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in the car.
- Use an approved toddler car seat correctly and wear your seat belt.

Pedestrian Safety

- Hold onto your child when you are around traffic.
- Supervise outside play areas.

Prevent Drowning

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone -- NEVER.
- Continuously watch your child around any water, including toilets and buckets. Keep toilet seats down, never leave water in an unattended bucket, and store buckets upside down.

Poisons

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, etc. locked away.
- Put the poison center number on all phones.
- Ask your doctor about syrup of Ipecac. Use it only if you are told to do so.
- Purchase all medicines in containers with safety caps.
- Do not store poisons in drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

Immunizations

At the 15-month visit, your child may receive shots. Your child may run a fever and be irritable for about 1 day and may have soreness, redness, and swelling in the area where the shots were given. You may give acetaminophen drops (1 dropperful, or 0.8 ml, every 4 to 6 hours) to prevent fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed to provide comfort.

Call your child's physician if:

- Your child has a rash or any reaction to the shots other than fever and mild irritability.
- Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

If your child just got either the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) or the varicella vaccine, please note: A small number of children get a rash and fever 7 to 14 days after the shots. The rash usually occurs on the main body area and lasts 2 to 3 days.

Call your child's physician immediately if:

- The rash changes to purple spots.

Call your physician within 24 hours if:

- The rash becomes itchy.
- The rash lasts more than 3 days.

Next Visit

Your child's next visit should be at the age of 18 months. Bring your child's shot card to all visits.

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