

18 Month Old Well Visit

In addition to checking your child's growth, you can also expect your doctor to:

1. Administer screening tests that help identify developmental delays or autism.
2. Ask questions, about:
 - Eating. Feed your toddler three meals and two or three scheduled nutritious snacks a day. Growth slows in the second year so don't be surprised if your child's appetite decreases. Your child can drink from a cup and use a spoon but probably prefers to finger-feed.
 - Peeing and pooping. You may notice diapers are dryer for longer periods, but most children do better with toilet training between 2 and 3 years of age. Let your doctor know if your child has diarrhea, is constipated or has poop that's hard to pass.
 - Sleeping. There's a wide range of normal, but generally toddlers need about 11-13 hours of sleep a day, including one or two daytime naps. By 18 months old, most toddlers have given up their morning nap.
 - Developing. By 18 months old, it's common for many toddlers to:
 - ◆ say 10-20 words
 - ◆ point to body parts
 - ◆ run
 - ◆ walk up stairs with hand held
 - ◆ throw a ball
 - ◆ take off some clothes
 - ◆ scribble with a crayon
 - ◆ engage in pretend play
3. Perform a physical exam. This will include an eye exam, tooth exam, listening to the heart and lungs and paying attention to your toddler's motor skills and behavior.
4. Update immunizations. Immunizations can protect kids from serious childhood illnesses, so it's important that your child receive them on time. Immunization schedules can vary from office to office.
5. Order tests for lead exposure, anemia or tuberculosis if your child is at risk.

Looking ahead

Here are some things to keep in mind until your next routine visit at 2 years:

Feeding

- Give your child whole milk (not low-fat or skim milk) until 2 years of age.
- Serve milk and juice in a cup and limit juice to no more than 4 ounces (120 ml) a day.

- Food "jags" are common during the toddler years. Even if your child gets stuck on one food, continue serving a variety. Let your child decide what to eat and when he has had enough.

Learning

- Toddlers learn best by interacting with people and exploring their environment. Make time to talk, read and play with your child every day.
- TV viewing (or other screen time, including computers) can interfere with the brain development of young children. Therefore, TV is not recommended for those under 2 years old.
- Have a safe play area and allow plenty of time for exploring and active play.

Routine care and safety

- Watch for signs that your toddler is ready to start potty training, including showing interest in the toilet, staying dry for longer periods and pulling pants up and down.
- Set up a potty chair and let him come in the bathroom with you.
- Brush your child's teeth without toothpaste twice a day. If you haven't already, schedule a dental appointment.
- Toddlers look for independence and will test limits. Be sure to establish reasonable and consistent rules.
- Tantrums are common at this age, and are worse when kids are tired or hungry. Head off tantrums before they happen — distract your child or remove him from frustrating situations.
- Don't spank. Children don't make the connection between spanking and the behavior. If necessary, use a brief time-out to discipline your toddler.
- Keep your baby in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat until he is at least 2 years old or reaches the highest weight or height limit allowed by the car-seat manufacturer.
- Apply sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher at least 15 minutes before going outside to play and reapply about every two hours.
- Limit exposure to secondhand smoke, which increases the risk of heart and lung disease.
- Make sure your home is safe for your curious toddler:
 - ◆ Keep out of reach: choking hazards; cords; hot, sharp, and breakable items; and toxic substances (lock away medicine and household chemicals).

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- ◆ Keep the Drug and Poison Information Center number in your phone: 1-800-222-1222.
- ◆ Use safety gates and watch your toddler closely when on or near stairs.
- ◆ To prevent drowning, close bathroom doors, keep toilet seats down and always supervise your child around water (including baths).
- ◆ Be sure the crib mattress is in the lowest position.
- ◆ Protect your child from gun injuries by not keeping a gun in the home. If you do have a gun, keep it unloaded and locked away. Ammunition should be locked up separately. Make sure kids cannot access the keys.