

# THE CHILDREN'S CLINIC, P.C.

www.childrens-clinic.com

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## AGE 15-18 MONTHS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Wt: \_\_\_\_\_ lb \_\_\_\_\_ oz \_\_\_\_\_ %

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ht: \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ %

Head: \_\_\_\_\_ cm \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Next physical appointment at 18-24 months of age**

**Special Instructions:**

**DEVELOPMENT:** Your toddler will be walking well alone, might be running and climbing, and can stoop and pick up objects. She can understand simple directions from you. He might point to pictures in a book or to named body parts. She might have few words but will "talk" a lot, using her own jargon. Most 18-month-olds will have a vocabulary of 4-10 words or more. She can indicate needs by pointing, vocalizing or showing you what she needs. He might show anxiety when separated from a parent but might be willing to leave a parent to play with others, checking back often. Your toddler might copy crayon strokes and stack 2-3 blocks.

**FEEDING AND DIET:** Children at this age typically do not eat much and may be picky eaters. Continue to offer your child a variety of foods from the basic food groups, and he will get the nutrition he needs. Even when she refuses certain foods, continue to offer them in small portions. Some active children may need a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack such as fruit, softly cooked vegetables, yogurt, bagels, cheese, fruit smoothies or unsweetened dry cereal. Don't allow her to fill up on non-nutritious snacks or "empty-calorie" foods (desserts, cookies, candies, chips, juice, punch). Limit milk to 16-18 ounces per day, and wean from the bottle to the cup. Encourage your child to drink water. Vitamin supplements are usually not necessary, but if you feel your child is not getting any fruits and vegetables, you may purchase a liquid vitamin supplement. Your child may or may not be ready for chewable vitamins.

Feeding time is a social event. Include your child at family meals, and develop the habit of eating together as a family. Remember, mealtime at this age will be messy. Turn off the television during meal times, as this time should be used to talk with and listen to your children. Encourage conversation. Do not allow walking or running while eating and drinking. Have your child sit in a highchair or at the table. Cut your child's food into bite-sized pieces, and allow him to learn to feed himself with his fingers. He can also begin to use a spoon or child-sized fork. Your child should be drinking only from a cup by 18 months old. Avoid nuts, popcorn, hard candy, whole hotdogs and gum, as these can cause choking.

**DENTAL:** Continue fluoride supplements, if you don't have fluoridated water. Introduce a toothbrush, and use it twice daily. Use a minimal amount of non-fluoridated toothpaste until age two years. Your toddler should be off the bottle to avoid dental decay. Do not to give a lot of juice or sugary drinks, even in a cup.

**SLEEP:** A favorite toy or blanket, a pacifier or thumb can make bedtime separation from parents easier for your toddler. Your child should be able to put herself to sleep after some quiet bedtime stories, rocking or cuddling. Nighttime awakenings may occur, and your reassurance should be brief. Your toddler will likely take one nap a day. She is safest sleeping in a crib rather than a bed. However, if your child is a climber, a mattress on the floor may be safest.

**TOILET TRAINING:** Your child might start to show an interest in the potty chair. However, toilet training is easier if you wait until your child is ready - usually around 2-4 years of age. Signs of readiness include: telling you when she is wet, wetting, or about to wet; bringing you a clean diaper; tugging at a wet or dirty diaper; keeping dry during naps; possessing good motor skills for walking and sitting well; pulling her pants up and down; or showing a desire to please her parents.

When your child shows signs of readiness, get a potty chair that sits on the floor. Encourage your child to sit on the chair fully-clothed. When he is comfortable with that, have him then sit on the potty chair without a diaper on. NEVER let this become a battle. Never force your child to sit on the potty, nor punish her for accidents. Be patient, and be sure to give lots of praise for her doing it correctly.

**PLAYTIME:** Don't expect your child to share toys with other children. They typically engage in "parallel" play, that is, they play alongside another child, but not necessarily cooperatively with another child. Your toddler will be interested in imitative play, such as taking care of a baby doll, "sweeping" the floor, and "driving" the car. He will enjoy your involvement in these games. Your toddler will enjoy looking at books. Point to pictures and name objects and describe what is occurring in the pictures. Music is enjoyable to toddlers. Sing songs. Play children's tapes or musical instruments.

**DISCIPLINE:** Your toddler is learning to be independent and is naturally curious. Allow him to make some choices. This autonomy helps her sense of competence. It is important for parents to discuss with each other their expectations and management of their child's behavior. Discipline means teaching your child what to do, not just what not to do. Praising your child for good behavior, such as "I like it when you help me pick up toys" is much more effective than constantly saying "no". It also helps build your child's self-esteem. Removing breakable and dangerous objects will help create this positive environment. It is unrealistic to expect toddlers to understand rules about not breaking objects. If your child breaks a rule or an object, remove him from the area, remove the forbidden object, and encourage another activity. Tell her "no," and be consistent. "No" means "no" for the same thing everyday. Do not be surprised if your child says "no" in return. You may start to use the "time-out" concept by putting your child in a room (not his bedroom) or on a chair for a minute. Avoid slapping his hand or spanking. This punishment teaches that it is okay to hit others when you are angry or if you are bigger than they are.

As children realize there are rules to follow, they often react with outbursts of frustration and anger, such as breath-holding, temper tantrums and head banging. They also will hit, kick and bite. Generally, the best way to handle this situation is to ignore your child and walk away. This is not easy to do. As you ignore this behavior, initially the frequency may increase as your child tries harder to control you. With continued ignoring, they will eventually stop.

Try to interest your child in other activities before she reaches the point of loss of control. Temper tantrums often occur when children are overly-tired or hungry. Try to avoid these situations. Praise your child when he manages to control his anger. However, when a full-blown tantrum begins, ignore it and walk away, or place her in a "time-out" area. Do not laugh, make fun of, or scold your child. When the tantrum stops, then give your attention back to her.

**IMMUNIZATIONS:** Your child will probably receive a DTaP/Hib vaccine today. Also, the Hep B #3 might be given, if it has not already been done. If other vaccines, such as the MMR, chickenpox or pneumococcal vaccine have not been completed earlier, they might be done today. Please review the vaccine information sheets that are provided to review possible side effects.

**SAFETY:** This can be a challenging age. Supervision of a busy toddler is very important and tiring.

- Poison-proof your house. Keep all detergents, cleaners and medicines locked up and out of reach. Never store poisons in food containers. If a poisoning occurs, call the **POISON CONTROL CENTER** at **(800) 222-1222**. At this time, syrup of ipecac is no longer recommended.
- A fenced yard is preferred for outside playing. Beware of driveways and streets.
- Teach your child the meaning of the word "hot." Use the back burners on the stove, and turn handles toward the back.
- Set hot water thermostats at 120 degrees F.
- Never leave your child alone near a bathtub, bucket of water, well or swimming pool.
- Use doors or gates at stairwells. Use window safety devices.
- Anticipate that some children will climb out of a crib at this age. Lower the crib mattress.
- Watch for small objects that can cause choking. Be careful with plastic bags and balloons.
- Use an approved car seat in the approved manner.
- Check the batteries in your smoke alarm.

**SUGGESTED READING:**

**Caring for Your Baby & Young Child** by the AAP, published by Bantam Books, 1991.

**The Magic Years: Understanding and Handling the Problems of Early Childhood** by Selma Fraiberg, published by Macmillan, New York, 1966.

**Taking Care of Your Child** by Robert Pantell, M.D., James Fries, M.D., and Donald Vickery, M.D., published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, Mass., 1993 (4<sup>th</sup> Edition).

**Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development** by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, Massachusetts, 1992.

**What to Expect the Toddler Years** by Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff, and Sandee Hathaway, published by Workman Publishing Co., 1994.

**Your One Year Old** and **Your Two Year Old** both by Louise Bates Ames and Frances Ilg, published by Delta/Bantam Doubleday Dell, New York, 1980's.

**Your Child's Health** by Barton Schmitt, published by Bantam Books, 1991.

