

15 TO 18 MONTHS OLD

NUTRITION

Toddlers are often picky eaters, and weight gain during the second year will be only about half of the growth of the first twelve months. Offer nutritious meals with a goal of five vegetables and fruits daily. Remember servings will be smaller than adults' -- about 1 tablespoon per year of age. Your child should be drinking solely from a cup at this point. Whole milk is recommended until at least 2 years of age.

Continue to offer nutritious foods and make meal time a happy time. Our example as parents greatly influences our children's eating habits. In addition, you should be brushing your child's teeth at least once a day. Toothpaste is not needed until he can spit on demand. The first dental checkup is usually around age 3 years. If your drinking water is not fluoridated, you may need to add a fluoride supplement. Please discuss this with us

SAFETY

Concerns include car seat restraints, smoke detectors, fire avoidance, poison prevention, hot water temperature, passive smoke, dental health and general household safety. If not already done, "Kiddie locks" on cabinets and removal of dangerous items such as scissors, knives, cleansers or dangling electric cords can help prevent injuries. Lowering your child's crib mattress is also recommended. Children from 1-3 years of age are at the highest risk of poisoning. Protect your child by keeping medicines, cleaners, insecticides and beauty products out of sight and reach. Because accidents and ingestion of harmful materials may take place, we recommend you have emergency numbers handy and that you have on hand, SYRUP OF IPECAC. If your baby has ingested a potentially dangerous substance, call POISON CONTROL 404-616-9000 for immediate advice before using the Ipecac. Use gates at the top and bottom of stairways to prevent dangerous falls. Never leave your child alone in a bath or near containers of water, including wading pools. If left alone, children can drown in only one inch of water.

DEVELOPMENT

Your toddler is learning to be independent. She is now participating more in feeding and getting dressed, often with definite opinions. Often, offering your toddler a choice between two alternatives will yield better results than asking "yes-no" questions. She is walking well and beginning to use several words. She may enjoy stacking or pulling toys. Regular reading will enhance your child's language development.

DISCIPLINE

The toddler's emerging independence can be frustrating to parents. Decide which behaviors are tolerable and which are unacceptable, then set a few simple rules regarding the unacceptable behaviors. Whatever your rules are, enforce them consistently. At this age, an environment with limited access to forbidden objects makes life easier. Teaching your child safe, polite and appropriate behavior will continue to be a very big job. Many books have been written and you may find these helpful:

[The New Dare to Discipline by James Dobson](#)

[The New Strong Willed Child by James Dobson](#)

[Good Behavior by Stephen Garber](#)

[How to Really Love Your Child by Ross Campbell](#)

[Shepherding a Child's Heart Ted Trip](#)

NEXT APPOINTMENT

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that toddlers receive physical examinations at 18 months and 2 years old. Your child may be due for immunizations at those visits.