

Caring for your 18-month-old toddler

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Keep Your Toddler Safe

Use a Car Seat

Install it properly in the back seat facing backward.

Prevent Suffocation

- Don't let your toddler play with balloons, plastic bags or coins.
- Don't give your toddler marbles or toys with small, removable parts (like buttons).

Prevent Drowning

- Don't leave your toddler alone around water.
- Learn child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Empty buckets, tubs and small pools as soon as you are done using them.

Prevent Burns

- Protect your toddler from sunburn. Use sunscreen.
- Keep her away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters. Turn panhandles toward the back of the stove.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120°F.

Prevent Poisoning

- Lock all poisons (medicines, pest killers, paints, cleaning agents) out of reach and sight of your toddler.
- Tell your medical care provider if you have peeling paint in your home.

Prevent Other Injuries

- Teach your toddler caution around animals.
- Make sure an adult is always watching your child.
- Make your home child-safe (see our "[Child-Proofing Checklist](#)").
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- **Never shake, toss or hit your toddler.** Make sure other caregivers (like day care providers, aunts and uncles) don't either.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Feed your toddler at family mealtimes. Give her 2 to 3 nutritious snacks per day, but don't use them as rewards. Nutritious snacks are low in fat and sugar and high in fiber (like most fruits).
- As much as possible, let your child feed himself.
- Offer her nutritious foods and let her decide how much to eat.
- Avoid foods that your child might choke on (nuts, hot dogs, popcorn, whole beans, chunks of raw carrot, celery or apple, whole grapes, hard candies, raisins, corn, or tough meat).
- Do not allow a bottle at bedtime.

Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Care for Yourself

Make some time for your self each week by letting someone else care for your child.

Remember the Family

- Try to set aside special time for other important people in your life.
- Talk with your sex partner about birth control. Ask yourselves, “How many children can we care for?”

Encourage Healthy Development

- Encourage your toddler socially. Talk with him. Encourage him to explore and play with other children. Don't let him watch television.
- Encourage learning words. Read stories and rhymes with him. Use words to describe what you think he is feeling.
- Help her be stronger and more coordinated. Let her color and scribble.
- Help him love himself by showing him respect. Never yell at him. When he is upset, take time to try to understand why. Set limits by taking him away from the situation that is causing a problem. Try to see and prevent problems before they occur.

Encourage Healthy Behaviors

- Praise your toddler for healthy behavior. See our “Encouraging Good Behavior” handout.
- Help her learn to calm or quiet herself. A favorite toy, stuffed animal or blanket can help.
- Toddlers need structure. Create a schedule for his day and try to keep to it. Create daily routines. Help the family create a few rules that apply to everyone in the family. Enforce family rules consistently.
- Use discipline as a way of teaching and protecting your toddler, not punishing him. Some toddlers are aggressive, but they are not “mean.” Teach your child that hitting, biting and kicking others is not okay. Teach him that breaking things is not okay.

Encourage Self Care

- Your child needs a regular bedtime, and may need a nap each day.
- Help him sleep through the night in his own bed.
- Help her brush her teeth at least daily. Use a tiny amount of toothpaste with fluoride. Make her an appointment to see a dentist.

Prevent Sickness— Identify and Treat It Early

- Learn how to find quickly the Poison Control Center telephone number. It is on the inside cover of the phone book. Keep syrup of ipecac in your home.
- Keep your toddler away from cigarette smoke. Don't smoke when he is in the car. Don't smoke in the home.
- Call the clinic right away if your toddler is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for children to reduce fever. A fever is an under-the-arm temperature of 101°F or higher. A dehydrated toddler has fewer than five wet diapers a day, is much less active than usual, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Your toddler's next visit is when he is about 2-years-old. At this visit we may check him for infection with the tuberculosis bacteria. We will need your help to find out if he is developing normally. Remember to bring his immunization record with you.