

Caring for your 2-year-old child

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Keep Your Child Safe

Use a Car Seat Install it properly in the back seat facing forward.

- 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 your toddler away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters.
 - Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120°F.

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

- Prevent Other Injuries**
- Teach your child to respect animals and other living things.
 - Make sure an adult is always watching your child.
 - Make your home child-safe (see our "[Child-Proofing Checklist](#)").
 - If your child is on a bike with you, make him wear a helmet.
 - Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
 - Make sure playground equipment is not over 3 feet tall and not made of wood
 - **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.
- Give your child nutritious foods but let her decide how much to eat. You should choose the menu, not your child.
- 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 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. Sing together. Encourage him to explore and play with other children. Limit television and videos to one hour per day.
- Excite his mind. Read stories and rhymes with him. Help him use words to express feelings. Go to a library or a museum, but don't go too long.
- Help her be stronger and more coordinated. Take her to a park or play ground where she can run, jump and climb.
- Encourage self-confidence. When dressing, eating and playing, offer choices that are okay with you.
- Help him love and respect himself. Never yell at him. When he is upset, take time to try to understand why. Use correct words for genitalia (like “penis” and “vagina”).
- 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

- Your 2-year-old is naturally self-centered. Do not expect her to share or take turns easily. Praise her for healthy behavior. See our “Encouraging Good Behavior” handout.
- Help him learn to calm or quiet himself. A favorite toy, stuffed animal or blanket can help. Teach him that hitting, biting and kicking others is not okay.
- Toddlers need structure. Create a schedule for her day and try to keep to it. As a family, create a few rules that apply to everyone. Enforce them consistently.
- Use discipline as a way of teaching and protecting your toddler, not punishing him.

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 toothpaste with fluoride. Take her to see a dentist.
- Encourage toilet training when your child is ready.

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 treat fever or minor injuries. A fever is an oral temperature of 100.4°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 child's next visit is when he is about 3-years-old. At this visit she may be checked for infection with the tuberculosis bacteria. We will need your help to find out if she is developing normally.