

WELL-CHILD CHECKUP

15 MONTHS



Well-Child Checkup: 15 Months

At the 15-month checkup, the healthcare provider will examine your child and ask how things are going at home. This checkup gives you a great opportunity to have your questions answered about your child's emotional and physical development. Bring a list of your questions to the checkup so you can make sure all your concerns are addressed.

This sheet describes some of what you can expect.

Development and milestones

The healthcare provider will ask questions about your child. They will observe your toddler to get an idea of the child's development. By this visit, most children are doing these:

- Takes a few steps on their own
- Pointing at items they want or to get help
- Copying other children while playing, like taking toys out of a box when another child does
- Stacks at least 2 small objects
- Looks at a familiar object when you name it
- Saying 1 or 2 words besides "Mama" and "Dada"

Feeding tips

At 15 months of age, it's normal for a child to eat 3 meals and a few snacks each day. If your child doesn't want to eat, that's OK. Provide food at mealtime, and your child will eat when they are hungry. Don't force the child to eat. To help your child eat well:

- Keep serving a variety of finger foods at meals. Don't give up on offering new foods. It often takes several tries before a child starts to like a new taste.

- If your child is hungry between meals, offer healthy foods. Cut-up vegetables and fruit, unsweetened cereal, and crackers are good choices. Save snack foods, such as chips or cookies, for special occasions.
- Your child should continue to drink whole milk every day. But they should get most calories from healthy, solid foods.
- Besides drinking milk, water is best. Limit fruit juice. You can add water to 100% fruit juice and give it to your toddler in a cup. Don't give your toddler soda.
- Serve drinks in a cup, not a bottle.
- Don't let your child walk around with food or a bottle. This is a choking risk. It can also lead to overeating as your child gets older.
- Ask the healthcare provider if your child needs a fluoride supplement.

Hygiene tips

- Brush your child's teeth at least once a day. Twice a day is ideal, such as after breakfast and before bed. Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, no larger than a grain of rice. Use a baby's toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Ask the healthcare provider when your child should have their first dental visit. Most pediatric dentists recommend that the first dental visit happen within 6 months after the first tooth appears above the gums, but no later than the child's first birthday.

Sleeping tips

Most children sleep around 10 to 12 hours at night at this age. If your child sleeps more or less than this but seems healthy, it's not a concern. At 15 months of age, many children are down to one nap. Whatever works best for your child and your schedule is fine. To help your child sleep:

- Follow a bedtime routine each night, such as brushing teeth followed by reading a book. Try to stick to the same bedtime each night.
- Don't put your child to bed with anything to drink.

- Check that the crib mattress is on the lowest crib setting. This helps keep your child from pulling up and climbing or falling out of the crib. If your child is still able to climb out of the crib, talk with your healthcare provider about switching to a toddler bed. Ask your healthcare provider for tips on toddler-proofing your child's sleeping area.
- If getting the child to sleep through the night is a problem, ask the healthcare provider for tips.

Safety tips

To keep your toddler safe:

- Plan ahead. At this age, children are very curious. They are likely to get into items that can be dangerous. Keep latches on cabinets. Keep products like cleansers medicines are out of reach. Cover unused outlets. Secure all furniture.
- Protect your toddler from falls. Use sturdy screens on windows. Put gates at the tops and bottoms of staircases. Supervise your child on the stairs.
- If you have a swimming pool, put a fence around it. Close and lock gates or doors leading to the pool. Never leave your child unattended near any body of water. This includes the bathtub and a bucket of water.
- Watch out for items that are small enough to choke on. As a rule, an item small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube can cause a child to choke.
- In the car, always put your child in a car seat in the back seat. Babies and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat for as long as possible. That means until they reach the top weight or height allowed by their seat. Check your safety seat instructions. Most convertible safety seats have height and weight limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more. Ask your child's healthcare provider if you have questions.
- Teach your child to be gentle and cautious with dogs, cats, and other animals. Always supervise the child around animals, even familiar family pets. Never let your child approach a strange dog or cat.

- Keep your child away from hot objects. Don't leave hot liquids on tables that your child can reach or with tablecloths that your child might pull down.
- Keep this Poison Control phone number in an easy-to-see place, such as on the refrigerator: 800-222-1222.
- If you own a gun, make sure it's stored in a locked location, unloaded, with ammunition also locked up.
- Limit screen time to video calls with loved ones. Screen time (TV, tablets, phones) is not recommended for children younger than 2 years.

Vaccines

Based on recommendations from the CDC, at this visit your child may get these vaccines:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Haemophilus influenzae type b
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Pneumococcus
- Polio
- Chickenpox (varicella)

Teaching good behavior and setting limits

Learning to follow the rules is an important part of growing up. Your toddler may have started to act out by doing things like throwing food or toys. Curiosity may cause your toddler to do something dangerous, such as touching a hot stove. To encourage good behavior and keep your toddler safe, start setting limits and enforcing rules. Here are some tips:

- Teach your child what's OK to do and what isn't. Your child needs to learn to stop what they are doing when you say to. Be firm and patient. It will take time for your child to learn the rules. Try not to get frustrated.
- Be consistent with rules and limits. A child can't learn what's expected if the rules keep changing.
- Ask questions that help your child make choices, such as, "Do you want to wear your sweater or your jacket?" Never ask a "yes" or "no" question unless it is OK to answer "no." For example, don't ask, "Do you want to take a bath?" Simply say, "It's time for your bath." Or offer a choice like, "Do you want your bath before or after reading a book?"
- Never let your child's reaction make you change your mind about a limit that you have set. Rewarding a temper tantrum will only teach your child to throw a tantrum to get what they want.
- If you have questions about setting limits or your child's behavior, talk with the healthcare provider.

Next checkup: 18 Months

© 2000-2022 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions.