

Well Child Visit: 18 months

Your child is one and a half years old! Your child is learning to become more independent, and will want to do things on his or her own.

Growth and Development

All children develop at different rates, but you may notice that your child can:

- Follow simple instructions
- Scribble
- Look at books or magazines, turning the pages
- Build with blocks
- Feed self with spoon or fork
- Name objects.

You can help your child's development by:

- Reading to your child daily (**Picture 1**)
- Speak to your child clearly, no baby talk
- Playing with your child (pretend, the name game, scribbling)



Picture 1 Read to your child each day.

Nutrition

- Give your child healthy meals 3 times a day, plus 2 healthy snacks.
- Give no more than 4 ounces (one half cup) of juice per day. Serve 100% juice.
- Give no more than 16 ounces (2 cups) whole milk per day.
- A slice of cheese or 4 ounces of yogurt may be given in place of milk.
- Eat family meals. Be a role model for your child by eating healthy foods.
- Limit sweets and fast foods.
- Do not offer food as a bribe or reward.

Sleep

- Your child will probably still need a nap at this age.
- Develop a bedtime routine (for example: bath, brush teeth, story). Have the same bedtime each night.
- Nightmares or bedtime fears may develop at this age. Comfort your child, but do this in the child's room. Use a night light or open bedroom door to help calm fears.

Behavior and Discipline

Children tend to feel more secure and behave better when they know they have clear limits.

- Teach children appropriate behavior (how to act for their age).
- Praise your children for behaving well.
- If children behave inappropriately, show them how you want them to behave, or move them toward a different, acceptable action. This is called **redirecting**.
- Be consistent (steady) with discipline. Make rules and stick to them.
- Tell your children what the rules are, and what the results will be if they follow the rules or if they do not follow the rules.
- Do not make threats to your child that you do not intend to carry out. If you say you are going to do something (take something away or stop a fun activity), do it.
- Do not spank or hit your child.
- **Temper tantrums** may begin at this age. Do not give in to the tantrum to make the child stop. Make sure your child will not hurt himself, then speak to him or her in a calm voice.
- Parenting can be very hard sometimes, especially if your child's behavior is frustrating for you. If you need help dealing with a child's behavior, talk to the child's doctor. The doctor can give you advice, or direct you to other resources for more information.

Illnesses

Children who attend daycare are exposed to many viruses, and have frequent colds. Children may have 6 to 8 illnesses a year. Most colds last a few days.

Your child needs to be seen by a doctor if she or he has a fever that lasts more than 3 days, is sluggish, has difficulty breathing, is not getting better, or is not eating or drinking.

Most colds and flus are caused by viruses and **not** bacteria, and will get better in 7 to 10 days. Antibiotics only help bacterial infections, and should not be taken for a cold.

Safety and Child Proofing

Get down to the level of your child and check your home for possible hazards to your child.

- Make sure that all outlets have plain outlet covers or are blocked by heavy furniture.
- Make sure that all cabinet doors and drawers have child safety locks.
- Do not store cleaning products or other chemicals in cups, bottles, or glass jars.
- Keep the **Poison Control Center** number near the phone: **1-800-222-1222**.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded in a locked safe or box, with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit (50 degrees Celsius).
- Keep hot liquids and foods out of reach.
- Cook on the rear burners and turn the pot handles to the back of the stove.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Keep hot appliances (iron, curling iron, coffee pot, etc.) out of reach. Unplug them when not in use.
- Make sure that furniture, drawers, and lamps cannot be pulled down or tipped over.
- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.
- Do not place furniture that children can climb on near any window.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Make sure that there are no loose extension cords that can be pulled by the child, or that the child can become tangled in.
- Use the car seat that is correct for your child's age, weight and height. Children should stay in rear-facing car seats until they are 2 years old.
- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- Make sure all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working, and change the batteries every 6 months.
- Never leave your child alone in or near water (bathtub, bucket, pool, lake, etc.), even for a minute.
- When you go outside, put a hat on your child and apply a sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher).
- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning products, and other chemicals put away in a locked cabinet.

Next Check-Up

Your child's next well visit should be scheduled for around his or her 2nd birthday.