

# Well Child Handout: Your child at 18 Months

Your Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## TODAY'S MEASUREMENTS

Head circumference: \_\_\_\_\_ centimeters (\_\_\_\_\_ percentile)

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ inches (\_\_\_\_\_ percentile)

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ pounds (\_\_\_\_\_ percentile)

## DEVELOPMENT

**All children develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your child:**

- Walks steadier and faster
- Tries to kick or throw a ball
- Climbs stairs with help
- Stacks three to four blocks
- Turns pages of books
- Uses a spoon well
- Speaks five to 10 words and starts to use "I," "me" and "you"
- Knows body parts
- Keeps good eye contact
- Points out interesting objects such as flowers, bugs and planes
- Copies your actions
- Says "no," tests limits and has tantrums

## NUTRITION

**By now you should not be giving your child bottles. Keep offering your child different foods even if he or she is picky. It can still take 10 to 15 tastes of a new food before your child will accept it.**

- Let your child feed himself or herself.
- Offer mostly table foods. Do not give your child small, hard and round foods that he or she can choke on such as nuts, popcorn and whole grapes.
- Limit juice to no more than four ounces a day, only in a cup.
- Give your child milk in a cup but not more than 24 ounces a day. If your child does not drink at least 16 ounces of milk a day, serve other calcium-rich foods such as yogurt and cheese daily.
- Keep giving your child vitamin D supplements.

**IMMUNIZATIONS:** Your child will receive these shots if he or she did not get them at previous visits: Hepatitis A, DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis).

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- Fever
- More irritability or fussiness
- Discomfort, redness or swelling at the site of the shot
- Rash

**Labs:** Your child may need testing for anemia, lead poisoning and/or tuberculosis. Talk with your doctor.

*\* If needed, you can give your baby acetaminophen (Tylenol). Studies show acetaminophen may reduce vaccine effectiveness, so only use for more severe symptoms. Contact your doctor if your child's symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.*

**Next Visit: Age two**

## SAFETY

- Children at this age need constant attention and guidance. They are explorers and have no sense of fear. This means that they can quickly climb playground equipment, go up stairs and explore electrical outlets and medicine cabinets.
- Use a car seat that is convertible and rear-facing for as long as your child meets the weight and height recommendations or at least until he or she is two years old.
- Keep following safety guidelines when your child is close to water, near stairs or on high surfaces. Kids can climb onto counters and tables at this age; some will climb out of their crib.
- Cook on the back burners of your stove to reduce the risk of burns.
- Make sure that all chemicals, medications, cleaners and other hazardous materials are out of your child's reach.
- Be sure to watch your child closely when visiting friends and family who have not baby proofed their home.
- Put a hat on your child and apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30 when he or she is outdoors.
- Make sure that the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you have guns in your home, keep them unloaded, locked and stored away from ammunition.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, speak with your doctor or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or ndvh.org.
- Keep the Poison Control Hotline number handy: 1-800-222-1222.

## SLEEP

- Encourage interest in books by reading a few with your child every night before bed.
- Nightmares or bedtime fears can start at this age, and it is OK to respond quickly and comfort your child. But continue to put your child down while awake and allow him or her to fall asleep in his or her own bed.
- Most children this age still nap during the day, although many may combine their daytime sleep into one nap.
- If you have questions about your child's sleep habits, ask your doctor for help.

## SETTING LIMITS

You may feel as though the terrible twos arrived early. Your child may be testing limits, saying "no," and having temper tantrums. This is because your child is curious and feels more independent. Toddlers want to do things on their own. They may resist your help with getting dressed or eating. Your child may get easily frustrated and be independent at one moment and clingy the next.

Be patient and know what to expect of your child—this will make things easier. So will childproofing the house and creating spaces where he or she can play freely. Do not rush your child—let him or her eat with a fork even if mealtime takes longer. Before you switch from one activity to another, tell your child ahead of time. Do not spank or hit your child. Praise good behavior. Set consistent limits. During temper tantrums do not yell or give in. Encourage your child to express his/her emotions or redirect your child's attention to something else. If you get overly angry or frustrated with your child, put him or her in a safe place and take a few moments to calm down. Try to keep a sense of humor and remind yourself that this is a phase that will pass.

## FOCUS ON FAMILY

- This age can be hard, especially if your child is strong-willed. It is normal to feel frustrated at times. Talk with your partner about how to handle these moments. You may want to talk about your parenting styles and how you were disciplined as a child. Taking time for yourself and sharing your feelings with friends or other parents helps.
- Make time for the whole family to be together. This may include mealtimes, bedtimes and vacations.
- Spend time alone with each of your children.

## PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

- Let your child choose between two options, both of which are OK with you. For example, he or she can choose between two snacks to eat, two books to read or two pairs of shoes to wear.
- Speak to your child clearly and in adult language—do not use baby talk.
- Encourage him or her to repeat words.
- Describe your child's activities. When he or she eats, say "Wow, Jack is eating his apple," for example.
- Scribble, sort shapes and stack blocks with your child.
- Keep reading to your child daily.
- Do not allow your child to watch electronics.
- Let your child watch others using the toilet but do not force toilet training.
- Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Brush his or her teeth with a grain of rice sized bit of fluoridated toothpaste twice a day.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: [aap.org](http://aap.org); American Academy of Family Physicians: [aafp.org](http://aafp.org); Immunization information: [immunize.org](http://immunize.org), [cdc.gov/vaccines](http://cdc.gov/vaccines), [vaccine.chop.edu](http://vaccine.chop.edu), [familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org) and [vaccineinformation.org](http://vaccineinformation.org)
- Suggested reading:
  - 1, 2, 3, *The Toddler Years* by Irene DeZande
  - *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense* by Ellyn Satter
  - *Positive Discipline A-Z: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems* by Jane Nelsen, et al.
  - *Your One Year Old: The Fun Loving, Fussy 12–24 Month Old* by Louise Ames
- Other books are available at [aap.org/bookstore](http://aap.org/bookstore).