



Fifteen-Month Visit

Your child is 15 months old! The following are some tips to support your toddler's growth and development.



MassGeneral Hospital
for Children™

Feeding and Nutrition

- Continue to offer 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day on a regular schedule. Whenever possible, eat meals together as a family with no screens on. Try to always use a seat or highchair instead of offering food “on the go” or while playing. Do your best to make mealtime fun and interesting.
- At this age, your child should be eating almost all the healthy foods that you eat. Let them feed themselves with their fingers and try giving them a spoon. Continue to avoid food that may be a choking hazard, such as peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs, whole grapes, raisins or hard foods that can be bitten off, such as carrots, celery or raw apple.
- **Do not make eating a battle.** Children this age are very good at knowing when they are hungry and when they are full. It is your job to offer healthy, safe choices and let them do the rest. If your child rejects a food, try it again. It can take 10-15 times before they are willing to accept a new food.
- In general, offer foods before drinks at mealtime. Offer milk in a cup and **don't give more than 18-24 ounces of whole milk a day.** Too much milk can cause anemia (low red blood cell count) and make a child too full to eat enough solid foods.
- Juice provides no nutritional benefit and, if given at all, should be limited to no more than 4 ounces a day (100% juice only). Offer water in between meals instead
- If you haven't already, now is the time to stop giving your child a bottle. Children who use bottles after 12 months have a higher rate of cavities, ear infections, anemia and speech delay.

Oral Health



- Brush your toddler's teeth twice a day with a rice grain-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Let them brush first, then you do it again. Make it fun.
- To prevent tooth decay, **never let your child fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth.** You should brush your child's teeth AFTER the last food/drink of the night. Discuss with your doctor if your child needs extra fluoride.
- Discuss with your doctor when to see a dentist and if your child needs extra fluoride drops. (Need varies by town water supply)

Sleeping

- At this age, your child should sleep through the night and take 1-2 naps. Toddlers may switch to one nap a day between 12-18 months.
- Total sleep time per day varies a lot. If your child isn't acting overtired, they are likely getting enough sleep.
- Your child's crib mattress should be at the lowest setting to prevent falls.
- Bedtime routines should be consistent and enjoyable. Include reading at this time.
- Give your child a comfort item/small blanket (never the bottle!) to take to bed.

Safety Tips

1. Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat until age 2, or until they reach the highest weight AND height allowed by the maker of the seat. This is the safest position in the event of an accident.
2. Limit direct sun exposure. Use a large hat and sunscreen with SPF30 or higher.
3. Don't let your child out of your sight – even for a second – near water, tubs, buckets, pools, dogs, lawnmowers, driveways and streets. Children can drown in less than 2 inches of water.
4. Child-proofing:
 - ✓ Keep all cleaning supplies and medicines out of sight and reach.
 - ✓ Use safety gates, cabinet locks and socket plugs. Install guards on all windows above the 1st floor.
 - ✓ Tie window blind cords and drapes up and out of reach.
 - ✓ Secure TVs and bookcases to the wall and place guards on sharp edged furniture.
 - ✓ To protect from water burns, turn your hot water heater down to 120°F or less.
 - ✓ Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and change the batteries yearly.
 - ✓ Keep any firearms unloaded and locked with ammunition locked separately.

© 2022 MGHfC CARMA, Rev. 5/2022 MassGeneral Hospital for Children and Massachusetts General Hospital do not endorse any of the brands listed on this handout. This handout is intended to provide health information so that you can be better informed. It is not a substitute for medical advice and should not be used to treat any medical conditions.

Fifteen-Month Visit continued...

Development

- Children vary greatly in development. At this age, many toddlers will:
 - 1) Walk better, squat to pick up toys and climb stairs.
 - 2) Say 3-6 words and understand more (including simple questions and directions, like “Kick the ball to me.”)
 - 3) Use objects the way they are supposed to be used, like talking on the phone or sweeping with a broom.
 - 4) Participate in social games (like hide-and-seek and peek-a-boo), imitate things you do and show you objects they like.
- Try these tips to help with development:
 - 1) Read with your toddler every day and encourage them to use words, sounds and gestures to communicate even if you think you know what they want.
 - 2) Talk with your child about what you are seeing and doing together using simple, clear phrases.
 - 3) Teach your child their body parts and what to do with them. (Ex: “Blink your eyes, stomp your feet...”)
 - 4) Offer your child push/pull and sorting/stacking toys and crayons for scribbling.
 - 5) Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your child's development.

Immunizations (*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

Today (some likely given already at 12 months):

- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Hepatitis A
- DTaP
- Hib
- Pneumococcal

* The influenza vaccine is recommended during flu season.



Websites

- AAP Healthy Children | www.healthychildren.org
(Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
- AAP Immunization Info | www.aap.org/immunization
(Research-based information about childhood vaccines)
- One Tough Job | www.onetoughjob.org
(Information on development and a variety of parenting topics created by the MA Children's Trust Fund)
- Zero to Three | www.zerotothree.org
(More information on the health and development of toddlers)

Your toddler's next routine visit is recommended at 18 months old.

Discipline and Temper Tantrums



- Most importantly, **praise your child when they are behaving well and be a good role model.**
- Temper tantrums usually begin around 12-18 months and are a normal part of your child's development.
- Remember to stay calm, ignore the behavior (don't react) and try to use distraction. Don't give in – this teaches your child that a tantrum gets them what they want.
- Spanking or hitting is not ever advised and won't help.
- Reassure your child once negative behavior has stopped.
- Reserve “NO!” for when your child is going to get hurt or hurt others.
- Give your child choices whenever possible. For example, let them decide between two healthy fruits or between two books at bedtime. This will give them a sense of pride and will decrease the tantrums.

Important Numbers

- Poison Control:
800-222-1222
- Parental Stress Line:
800-632-8188
- HAVEN Domestic Violence Help Line
617-724-0054
- Smoking Quit Line (free):
800-TRY-TO-STOP
- Your doctor's office:
