

Two-Year Visit

Happy Birthday! This will be a fun and exciting year as your child's new language and motor skills allow them to explore the world in a different way.

Feeding and Nutrition

- **Mealtime Habits:** Almost all toddlers are picky eaters! Don't make eating a battle. Your job is to offer healthy meals and snacks and let your child do the rest.
- Help your child develop good eating habits. Avoid excessive sweets, fatty and fried items. Try not to offer food as a reward. Whenever possible, eat meals together as a family with all screens off. Try to sit down instead of offering food "on the go" or while playing. Serve one healthy meal for the family and resist making something else if your child refuses.
- **Drinks:** You may switch to low-fat or skim milk at this age. Limit milk to 12-20 ounces a day from a cup only. Juice (even 100%) has a lot of sugar and isn't recommended. If there is a special occasion and you decide to give juice, limit it to 4 ounces or less. Don't give your child sweetened drinks (Capri Sun®, Gatorade®, Hawaiian Punch®, soda, iced tea, lemonade). Instead, offer water in between meals.

Oral Health Tips

- If you haven't already, now is the time to eliminate the pacifier and bottle.
- Brush your toddler's teeth twice a day with a soft, child-sized brush and a small pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste smeared into the bristles. Discuss with your doctor if your child needs extra fluoride. Most doctors recommend the first dental check up by 2-3 years. Ask if you need help finding a dentist.

Behavior/Discipline

- **Praise your child when they are behaving well.**
- Temper tantrums are a normal part of development. Stay calm, ignore the behavior and don't give in. Reassure and play with your child again once the behavior has stopped.
- If distraction or ignoring doesn't work, consider giving your child a "time-out." Take your child away from the problem and give them time by themselves to calm down. Try 1 minute of time-out for every year of age. Don't let your child try to make excuses or talk their way out of it.
- Hitting, kicking, biting or throwing things aren't OK and should NOT be ignored. Firmly say "no hitting" or "no biting" to make sure they know what behaviors are not OK. Move away from your child for a few moments so they don't get attention for this type of behavior.
- Your child will test different behaviors to see what reactions they get. Set limits that are clear, specific and consistent.
- To help give your child a feeling of control, let them make choices whenever you can. Give them a few minutes warning before changing activities.



Toilet Training

- Children will start to show signs of readiness to begin toilet training anytime between 22-30 months. Don't try to rush it. Each child will learn in their own time. Be patient and create a supportive environment.
- A sign that your child is ready may be that they know when they are wet or dry or tells you when they have to poop.
- Start by buying a potty chair or seat to fit on top of the toilet. Praise your child for sitting on it even with their clothes on.
- Make trips to the potty a daily part of your child's routine, such as after waking, after meals or before naps.
- Read books about toilet training with your child. Teach your child words for body parts, pee and poop.
- Don't make your child feel bad about toilet training accidents. If things aren't going well, take a break and try again later.



Sleep

- Toddlers sleep 10-12 hrs per day.
- Although some children this age no longer want to nap during the day, most still need it. If your child refuses to nap, it is still important to have "quiet time" in the afternoon to relax and slow down.
- Stick to routines with fixed times for going to bed, waking up and taking naps/quiet time. Choose a quiet activity (such as reading and not screen time) for the half hour before bed.

Two-Year Visit continued...

Development

- Children vary greatly in development. At this age, many toddlers will:
 - 1) Run well, walk up and down stairs one foot at a time, kick a ball and balance on one foot.
 - 2) Say 20 or more words, start using two-word phrases like “drink milk” or “dada bye-bye” and follow two-step directions.
 - 3) Point to at least 4 body parts and turn pages one at a time.
 - 4) Bring objects over to show them to you, point to get your attention and imitate things you do.
 - 5) Play alongside other children rather than with them and refuse to share.
- Try these tips to help with development:
 - 1) Continue to read with your toddler every day and encourage them to use their words even if you think you know what they want. Ask questions about the pictures and stories you read together.
 - 2) Turn your child’s words into phrases. If they say, *bird*, you can say: *The bird is flying in the sky.*
 - 3) Play pretend with your child. Let your child take the lead. Ask them: *Who should I be?* and *What happens next?*
 - 4) Offer toys that your child can feel and change (Play-Doh®, sand), put together and take apart (big Legos®, building blocks, snap beads) and hold with a handle (paint brush, hammer, shovel).
 - 5) Give your child time to play with other kids their age. Help them with turn-taking. For example, you might say: *I know the ball is your favorite toy, but Ella would like a turn playing with it.*
 - 6) Limit screen time (TV, computer, video game, cell phone) to no more than 0-1 hour per day.
 - 7) Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about your child’s development.

Immunizations (*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

Today:

- The influenza vaccine is recommended during flu season.
- Your child will have a blood test to screen for lead poisoning or anemia.



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: _____

Websites

- AAP Healthy Children | www.healthychildren.org
(Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
- One Tough Job | www.onetoughjob.org
(Information on development and a variety of parenting topics created by the MA Children’s Trust Fund)

Safety Tips

Injuries are the leading cause of death of children under 4 years in the US.

Most injuries can be prevented.

1. It is safest for your child to ride in a **rear-facing** car seat until reaching the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer (often to age 3-4 years). Then, switch to a forward-facing seat with a harness.
2. Teach your child to use a helmet with their very first bike or scooter. Helmets keep heads safe!
3. Don’t let your child out of your sight – even for a second – near water, tubs, buckets, pools, dogs, lawnmowers, driveways and streets.
4. Lock doors to dangerous areas. Use safety gates, cabinet locks and socket plugs. Install guards on all windows above the 1st floor. (Toddlers can climb onto furniture that is close to windows and fall out.)
5. Watch your child very closely in the kitchen. They can now climb and reach up to higher areas where hot liquids, foods and grease can cause serious burns.
6. Keep medicines completely out of reach and preferably locked up. Remind other caregivers to secure their medications too. (Medicine in Grandma’s purse can look like candy.)
7. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and change batteries yearly.
8. Keep any firearms unloaded and locked with ammunition locked separately.