

Ask your health care provider's office if it takes part in the USIIS system. Your child's records will be entered into USIIS when she gets immunizations at a participating clinic or public health program.

For more information about immunizations, call the Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659 or visit [www.immunize-utah.org](http://www.immunize-utah.org).

## First Steps, First Shoes

Although some babies begin to walk at 9 to 10 months of age, and some wait until 17 to 18 months of age, most babies are "cruising" by 11 to 12 months. Some are taking a few steps all by themselves. The beginning cruiser pulls from kneeling to standing, then steps sideways while she holds on to your hands or the furniture for support. Soon, only one hand support is needed, and finally come those few brave steps with "no hands."

Unless your baby has some specific problem, there is no need to teach her how to walk, nor should you use a "walker" for a healthy, normal baby. You can help make early walking easier and safer, however. Be sure that floors aren't slippery. Remove scatter rugs, and pad sharp corners of coffee tables and other furniture. If a piece of furniture tips over easily, keep it out of your baby's way. Be sure that as your baby reaches for a hand hold, she won't pull down or grab anything fragile or dangerous (tablecloths, electrical cords, hot coffee, TV on furniture, etc.)

Babies really don't need shoes until they begin walking outdoors. Indoors, bare feet give the best grip – socks and booties are too slippery. When you shop for shoes, rubber soled sneakers are your best bet – they give feet flexibility, and they don't slip. Stiff, high-top shoes don't allow feet to bend or toes to grip. If you do buy leather soled shoes, always roughen the sole with sandpaper.

A 1-year-old's feet grow very fast, so shoes should be checked for fit every four to six weeks, especially if you have to push harder than usual to get baby's shoes on. To check for fit, stand with full weight on her feet, and check both feet. There should be 1/2-inch of space between the end of her longest toe and the end of the shoe. The widest part of the foot (the ball of the foot) should be in the widest part of the shoe, fitting snugly but not tightly at the instep. The shoe's heel should not slip up and down during walking. If shoes don't seem to fit properly, try other sizes and styles.

Do your baby's feet turn out when she stands or walks? Some turning out is normal. It seems to be nature's way of giving beginning walkers better balance. For the same reason, many normal babies have bowed legs during the early walking stage. With time, legs and feet gradually straighten and point forward. If turn-out or bowing seems excessive, call your health care provider.

## Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is one of the most common and preventable childhood health problems in the United States today. Children become lead poisoned when there is lead in their body by breathing leaded dust or putting things containing lead in their mouth.

Sources of lead can come from housing built before 1978 (lead-based paint), a person's occupation, hobby, water, food, soil, products and home or folk remedies. Many children do not show any signs of lead poisoning, but the effects can cause many health problems, including: learning disabilities, damage to the nervous system, kidneys and the brain. If you think your child has been exposed to lead, talk to your health care provider about a blood lead test. For additional information, contact your local health department.

## Postpartum Health for Mom

Your baby is growing and changing fast, and you may be feeling upset that your body is not what it used to be. Working your muscles on a regular basis will help you burn more calories and help your body get back to a healthy weight.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Strength training can be done many ways and doesn't require an expensive membership at a gym. Pushups, sit-ups or crunches, squats and other exercises can be done without any special tools at all. These exercises work the large muscles that you use every day like your chest, back, stomach, legs and arms, helping you to burn more calories, faster. These exercises will also help you in everyday activities, like lifting your baby, taking out the garbage and cleaning the house.

### NUTRITION

As you get back into a regular routine, you may be eating out more often. Eating in restaurants can be counter productive if you are trying to lose your baby weight. Most restaurant meals are oversized and full of saturated fat. But your meals out don't have to be bad for your health if you follow some basic rules.

When the server brings your food, ask for a take-out box or bag. Place one half of your meal in the box and eat the rest. That way you won't be tempted to overeat and you will have lunch already prepared for the next day! Look for foods that are baked, grilled, dry-sautéed, broiled, poached, or steamed. These cooking methods use less fat and are generally lower in calories. Always ask for a baked potato or steamed vegetables rather than French fries. And, don't hesitate to split a meal with your dinner partner. You will both benefit from eating less!

Tip: Try cooking your favorite restaurant meals at home. It is less expensive than eating out and you will improve your cooking skills.



The information contained in this newsletter is not a substitute for personal medical, psychiatric, or psychological advice, and readers are urged to consult their health care providers concerning specific questions or problems.

# From Twelve to Eighteen Months



Congratulations! You and your baby are celebrating one year together and beginning a second year. A lot of growth and changes have taken place this past year. Your baby's weight has at least tripled and she's eating many of the same foods you are. She is learning many new skills during this time. She may be about to walk or is walking and is still very curious about her expanding world. Safety continues to be an important concern. Now is the time to enjoy books and talk to each other. Your baby is developing at her own pace and doesn't need to be pressured into such things as toilet training. Enjoy your baby and look forward to another great year.

Schedule visits for well child care and immunizations at 12 months, 15 months, and 18 months of age

## Your Developing Baby

The 12 to 18-month-old baby is an exciting person to be around. She is interested in everything. She wants to practice every new skill she learns over and over again. Once you have created a safe environment for your baby, enjoy re-exploring your house and yard with her. To her, it's all new every day and it's all wonderful.

### GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

By her first birthday, your baby will probably have tripled her birth weight. She will also continue to gain in length, but the rate she is growing will be slower from now on. You will also see that her body proportions are continuing to change. She is getting longer in her trunk and extremities (taller) while her head grows more slowly. She should be sleeping 12-14 hours at night and may start refusing one of her two daily naps.

### DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE MUSCLES

By 12 months of age your baby will probably be doing some type of walking. It may be that she is pulling up to furniture, then cruising along it. She may be trying just a step or two on her own or she may be actually walking by now. All of these are normal for her age. She will walk with a wide straddle-legged step holding her arms up and out at shoulder level to help her balance.

Congratulations...she's a toddler.

### DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL MUSCLES

The toddler is an imitator. Your baby will try to do whatever she sees you do, whether it's folding the laundry or sweeping the floors. She continues to practice new skills and will cover many sheets of paper with scribbles. She will enjoy stacking blocks, nesting objects and dumping games. Her attention span is short (1-2 minutes), so keeping her busy while you get something done can be a challenge.



### DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-HELP SKILLS

Babies are learning many new skills during this period. In dressing, your baby will anticipate what happens next by holding out her foot for a shoe or putting out her arms when she sees her coat. She will be able to take off at least her own coat and shoes soon. She may begin to let you know when she has wet diapers or when she has had a bowel movement. She is also learning new feeding skills

### DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS

The 12 to 18-month-old understands simple commands. She can give you something she has, or get you something you both can see. She may not remember long enough to be able to get something from another room. She understands "no" but may test you by doing what she wants anyway. An immediate and consistent reaction from you (such as removing her from the object) will teach her that you mean what you say.

You can record your baby's important developmental milestones in the **Baby Your Baby Health Keepsake**.

## Nutrition

At this age you may notice day-to-day changes in your baby's appetite. One day she might want to eat everything. The next day, she may refuse almost anything you put in front of her. This is entirely normal and may continue for a year or two. You shouldn't worry if your baby seems to be eating less, because her growth is slower now. Many babies are continuing to breastfeed; this is normal.

Changes in eating habits also indicate your baby's increasing independence. She may now show definite likes and dislikes. This is a good time to begin offering a variety of healthy foods and letting her choose.

Offer the foods more than once in a variety of forms. Your baby might accept the new food a few days later. Feed your growing family according to MyPlate guidelines.

The groups are:

- fruits
- vegetables
- grains
- protein
- dairy.

It is important to offer small portions of foods from each group every day.

By her first birthday, your baby will probably be taking milk from a cup at mealtimes rather than from a bottle. She will also have been finger feeding for several months. Now is the time to let her experiment with a spoon. Be prepared for a lot of messy fun. You'll probably have to use two spoons at first – your baby practices with one, while you use the other to slip a few bites in!

*The following suggestions may help you avoid or deal with feeding problems:*

- Serve snacks that are nutritious and planned as part of baby's daily diet.
- Don't serve junk foods that are high in fats or sugar and low in certain vitamins. These can reduce baby's appetite.
- To increase baby's interest in food, plan regularly scheduled meals and snacks; start meals by serving smaller portions; let baby get plenty of fresh air, exercise and sleep.
- Don't bribe baby to get her to eat.
- Baby is easily distracted during mealtime by television programs or by other children running and playing. Such excitement and distractions can cause baby to waste time. Enough time should be allowed for baby's lack of skill in eating. But, if mealtime stretches beyond reason, the food should be removed in a matter of fact way without comment or argument.
- Babies learn the most about food by watching their parents and siblings. Improving food and nutrition habits for all family members is the best way to pass on good habits to the younger ones.
- If your baby doesn't like a particular food, don't force her to eat. Let her eat as much or as little as she wants rather than as much as you think she needs.
- It's normal for babies to spit out foods even if they like them. Continue to offer these foods, and eventually, your efforts will pay off.
- Let her feed herself as much as she is able. Sometimes she will refuse being fed because she wants to do it herself!
- Offer water between meals instead of juice and milk which can decrease your baby's appetite for meal times.
- Meals and snacks should be given at the

table. Don't allow baby to wander with food and cup.

## Hearing and Speech

Since language is something that every baby learns naturally, a baby doesn't need talking lessons. But you can encourage your baby to talk.

When you are busy with an activity and your baby is in the same room, talk to her. Tell her what you are doing and why. Talking to your baby may come naturally, but some parents will feel silly – as if they were talking out loud to themselves. It is tempting to go about your business quietly. But don't miss these excellent opportunities to begin stimulating, meaningful speech. Talking to your baby can be enjoyable. Your baby's speech will grow if you remember to give her encouragement rather than correction.



*Here are some other speech activities:*

- Start talking to your baby in simple sentences and phrases. Begin by describing what you are doing, seeing and thinking. For example, if you are baking a cake you could say, "Here is a bowl. Put in the cake mix. Pour in water, one egg, two eggs. Stir the cake. Stir it some more."
- When you are playing with your baby, use words to describe what she is seeing, doing, and hearing. This will give her words to think with and will help her understand that words have meaning. For example, she needs to know that cats are cats, puppies are puppies and dolls are dolls. When she understands what these objects are, she will eventually be able to say the words.
- Throughout the day give your baby opportunities to use often-repeated words. For example, at snack time, hold up some juice and say "Juice, want juice?" Encourage your baby to say

juice, but do not withhold the juice if she does not attempt to say the word. Continue to give her choices, asking questions and providing a good speech model.

- Your baby will enjoy imitating your voice pattern. Use "uh-oh" when appropriate and listen to what happens. Your baby also enjoys you imitating her babbling. The ease with which your baby babbles now is closely related to the ease and speed with which she will learn to use real language.
- Be sure to listen and respond to your baby. Try to answer her in words when she makes noise at you. Remember she is talking to you.
- Your baby will enjoy listening to rhymes and songs, and watching you play finger games. She may even try the motions with you.
- Make sounds around the room; watch your baby go find them. Once she has found the sound, talk to her about what she has accomplished.
- Looking in the mirror is an excellent way to make conversation with your baby. Point out facial and body parts on yourself and your baby. Ask, "where is your nose?" Help her find it.
- Show your baby picture books. Talk about the pictures and point to and name things in the picture.
- Talk about and play with toy animals. Your baby can say what the animals say: "Bow-wow," "Meow," "Moo-oo."

*The following checklist is a guide to normal hearing and speech development for a 12 to 18-month-old baby. As time goes by, check to see if your baby can do most of the things listed below:*

- ✓ Hears when called from another room
- ✓ Follows simple spoken directions, like "Come here" or "Do you want more?"
- ✓ Turns directly to interesting sounds or when her name is called
- ✓ By 12 months of age, uses about 2 to 3 words
- ✓ By 15 months of age, uses 6 to 8 words
- ✓ By 18 months of age, uses 10 to 20 words.

## Healthy Teeth

Between 12 and 18 months of age, a baby usually has four front top teeth, four front bottom teeth, and four back teeth. Brush these teeth with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush, using little or no toothpaste. Often, the flavor and foaming action of the toothpaste is irritating to the baby. However, if she likes toothpaste, use a smear on the toothbrush. As you wean your baby, the naptime and nighttime

bottles are often the last to go. Putting your baby to bed with the bottle can cause baby bottle tooth decay, a serious dental disease. Sucking on a thumb or finger is relaxing to babies and will not cause damage to the teeth at this age.

Take your child to a dentist by the time she is one year old or within six months of the first tooth coming in. If your child's teeth are healthy at this visit, the dentist will usually not be doing a full examination, x-rays or fillings, but rather discussing your child's oral health needs. Your dentist may talk about baby bottle tooth decay, how to clean the teeth and gums, tips on how to ease the discomfort of teething and the right amount of fluoride drops. The dentist may apply a fluoride varnish to prevent or reverse any early cavities. Not all dentists see children this young, so you may need to be persistent in finding a general or pediatric dentist to see her.

Remember to give a daily fluoride supplement, as prescribed by your health care provider or dentist, until your child is 16 years of age.

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## Safety

Did you know that every month nearly 400 children under 4 years of age die in the United States because of unintentional injuries? Most of these injuries can be prevented.

Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their babies can do. Between 12 and 18 months of age, your baby will gain skills in walking and will begin to run, climb, jump and explore everything. This stage begins the most accident-prone time of her life. It is your responsibility to know that your baby's next move might result in injury if she is not protected.

## POISONING

Your baby will continue to explore her world by putting everything in her mouth, even if it doesn't taste good. She opens doors and drawers and loves to take things apart. She can open bottles easily now, so you must use safety caps on all medicines. Medicines, alcohol and illegal drugs should be kept in locked cabinets.

Your baby is now able to get into and on top of everything. She doesn't understand danger or remember "No" when she is exploring. Be sure to keep all household products and medicines up and away, completely out of her sight and reach.

If she does put something poisonous into her mouth, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. It's a good idea to have this phone number taped to your telephone to save time in an emergency.

## FALLS

Even though your baby is improving her walking skills, she will still fall. She is now beginning to climb and jump and run as well. A chair left next to a kitchen counter or table allows her to climb to dangerously high places.

Lock the doors to any dangerous area. Use gates on stairways and window guards above the first floor. Remove sharp-edged furniture from the room she is in.

## BURNS

The kitchen is a dangerous place for your baby during meal preparation. Hot liquids, grease, and hot foods spilled on her can cause serious burns. A safe place for your baby while you are cooking, eating, or distracted is her playpen or high chair. While your baby is learning to walk, she will grab anything to steady herself, including things like hot oven doors, table cloths or wall heaters. Keep her away from these dangers.

If your baby does get burned, put cold water on the burned area immediately. Then cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth. Call your baby's health care provider or local emergency facility for all burns.

## DROWNING

At this age your baby loves to play in water. Many young children drown after they wander off during a family gathering and fall into a body of water (like a pool, stream, pond or river) when no one is watching them closely. Never leave your baby alone in or near a bathtub, pail of water, wading or swimming pool or any other water, even for a moment. This

includes never leaving her alone with an older brother or sister in a bathtub.

## CAR SAFETY

Car crashes are the biggest danger to your baby's life and health. The crushing forces to your baby in a crash or sudden stop, even at low speeds, can cause severe injury. The only way you can prevent this type of injury is to use a car safety seat every time your baby is in the car.

By now, you should have changed over to a toddler car seat. Your child should still be rear facing until two years of age. Ask your health care provider or local health department which seats are safe.

## Books for Babies

Reading and looking at books can be one of the most satisfying activities you can share with your baby. Many parents find that "story time" is a great part of their baby's bedtime routine.

At first, your baby seems to have more fun just turning the pages. You don't have to read every word. Instead, involve your baby by asking questions and pointing to the pictures.

Don't get upset if your active little toddler won't sit still for the entire story. Forcing her to sit and listen may give her a dislike for books. If she is more interested in climbing or chasing a ball, that's all right.

Most babies will eventually become eager listeners when there are interesting books around the house and someone willing to read aloud.

## Immunizations

### KEEPING TRACK

There are more immunizations today than ever before. It can be hard keeping track of your child's immunizations, especially if you switch doctors or use a different clinic. It can get even harder the more children you have.

Now there's a way to help you keep track of immunizations, even if you have lost or misplaced your records. The Utah Statewide Immunization Information System (USIIS) keeps up-to-date records of your child's immunizations. USIIS is a confidential, computerized information system that keeps your child's records even if you change health care providers.