

a babysitter and starting school. (There are always exceptions, such as when the child is sick or when there has been a family crisis.)

## Immunizations

By 15 to 18 months your child should have completed the basic immunization series. These immunizations are necessary for your child to have the greatest amount of protection from disease.

If your child is up-to-date, the next immunizations he'll receive are the immunizations at the four-or five-year old well child care visit.

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).



## Safety

Your child and his world are developing rapidly during this time. Your child is active, curious, and eager to explore. He can walk, run, jump, climb, get into, onto, under and around more than ever before. He spends more time in outdoor play and activity. As his activity and ability to move around quickly increase, so do the risks and hazards of unintentional injury. A key factor in reducing or increasing these risks is the parents' perception of the child and the dangers to his safety. Because the toddler is no longer a "helpless infant," parents may overestimate his ability to recognize and avoid dangerous situations. Or they may underestimate how fragile and vulnerable he is, and how quickly he can get into trouble. For these reasons, parents may fail to provide adequate protection and supervision.

### CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Children need to be in a child safety seat until 80 pounds or 4'9". Seatbelts are made for adults – children still need extra protection so don't take them out too early! When your child hits 40 pounds, move him into a booster seat.

### WATER SAFETY

Your child may love the water, but he can quickly drown if left unattended for only a minute or two. Don't assume that the amount of water is too little or too shallow to be dangerous. Many small children have drowned 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. Children can also drown in only a few inches of water in bathtubs, water pails, toilets, and wading pools. A fence, gate, wall or other barrier does not always ensure protection. The only safe solution is constant supervision.

**Never leave your small child unattended in or near water.**

### NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

The neighborhood is full of fun and discovery for the toddler. The danger here is from the cars and other motor vehicles that travel up and down the street, pull in and out of driveways, and park and pull away from curbs. The toddler may be behind, in front of, or under a vehicle, and too small to be seen by the driver. Again, the key to unintentional injury prevention is adult supervision. The small child should not play in this dangerous environment.

**Never allow your child to play unattended in the vicinity of streets, driveways, alleys, or other areas where motor vehicles are present.**

### PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY

Play equipment provides great fun and is beneficial to a child's growth and development. However, swings, slides, climbers, teeter-totters, merry-go-rounds, and trampolines present real dangers for the small child. Much of public and home play equipment is designed for older children – not for the toddler. But left unsupervised, the toddler may try to imitate the "big kids," and use the equipment unsafely. The result can be serious injury from falls, pinching, head and spinal cord injury – even strangulation.

Once again, the only adequate prevention is adult supervision.

**Never allow your child to play unattended on playground equipment.**

Remember, the active and curious toddler needs proper supervision in all his activities. Your child's safety depends on you.

## Postpartum Health for Mom

These days, you are probably busy chasing your toddler around the house. That's good! You are using energy, burning calories and strengthening your muscles with all that activity. But don't forget to take care of yourself, as well. This is the time that you might want to consider joining a walking club, or mom and baby classes that are especially designed for new mothers. You may also want to start including game playing with your child into your fitness goals: playing tag, sprinting, jumping rope, splashing in a shallow kiddie pool.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

If you plan to go to a gym that has a baby-sitting facility, it's important that you check out the sitter and the space before you drop off your child. Watch how your baby interacts with the other children. Trust your instincts. If you like the sitter and facility, it's a good idea to get your child familiar with the person and space before leaving them alone – otherwise you may spend most of your workout time running from your workout to your crying child. While this may be good exercise, it's not terribly relaxing.

### NUTRITION

If you haven't been able to drop some of your "baby weight" yet, maybe it is time to take a fresh look at your eating habits. It is important that you know what, when, where and how much you eat. Before you start to change your eating habits, start a food diary. Write down every bite of food you eat, what time of day, where you ate it, how much you ate and how you were feeling when you ate it. After about 2 weeks of keeping track, you will see when you are taking in those extra calories that are quickly stored as fat and can start making healthy changes.

# From Eighteen to Twenty-four Months



Your 18-month-old toddler has been walking for some time now and is getting better at it every day. He is also developing other new abilities and skills, loves to explore and to play games. Despite this progress, your toddler may feel dissatisfied with his abilities and frustrated when he can't do what he wants to do. Failure and frustration often lead to temper tantrums. Safety is a concern and increased supervision is needed for your child at this age.

This is the final Baby Your Baby newsletter you will receive. We hope that you and your child have benefited from the information we have shared with you. Good luck in the future and happy parenting!

Schedule visits for well child care and immunizations at 18 months and 24 months of age

## Your Developing Baby

### GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

The 18 to 24-month-old's growth is continuing, but at a slower pace than before. He will have about 16 teeth. He should be sleeping 10-12 hours a night and taking a nap during the day.

### DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE MUSCLES

By now your toddler has learned how to run. He may, however, need to stop before he can change directions. He is learning how to walk up and down stairs (but not yet alternating feet). He can throw a ball, seat himself in a child's chair, and climb everything, so it's time to keep a close watch.

### DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL MUSCLES

This is a time for your child to refine the skills he has been learning. His scribbling will mature into lines and attempts at circles. He will build toy block towers easily and can operate some of his toys without your help.



### DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-HELP SKILLS

Your toddler is a busy person. He has little interest in food and will gradually improve cup and spoon use so he spills less. Remember that his rate of growth has slowed greatly and that he may eat well at only one meal each day. Don't worry about his changing attitude toward food. Dressing is an area of interest to him now and he will take off some simple clothes by himself. With some help from you, he may be able to take his shoes off if they are untied.

### DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Your toddler is becoming an individual with a unique personality and strong likes and dislikes. You can expect more negative behavior from your 18 to 24-month-old. He may now resist foods and activities he once enjoyed. Give him time to conform. Avoid saying things as if he has a choice, if in fact it is something he must do. For example, don't ask him if he wants to go to bed; tell him it is time for him to go to bed. Your child has a longer attention span now and may work alone on a project or at play for 10-15 minutes or longer. He is starting to develop reasoning skills but still has poor judgment and little sense of danger. He is impulsive and very curious, but will try to understand your explanations if you keep them very simple and very short.

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

## Temper, Temper!

What happens to those sweet babies we love so much? They turn into independent-minded toddlers, that's what! Still loveable, still appealing, and very busy. The "terrible twos" might better be called the "testing twos." Your toddler is learning a lot – about his body's abilities, about expressing his ideas and controlling his impulses, and about what other people expect of him. He learns by testing and trying out, exploring and experimenting. In the process, some unhappy experiences are bound to occur, and failure and frustration lead to temper tantrums!

Every child has his share of tantrums and every parent has been embarrassed by them. Parents sometimes fear their child may injure himself by hitting his head or holding his breath. Not so – nature heals bruises and insists on breathing. Nor does the child hate the parent; his anger is directed at whatever or whomever is handy.

Children are quick to discover, however, that tantrums can be used to get parents to give in to unreasonable demands. Be understanding of your child's unhappiness, but don't be a pushover!

Planning, and lots of patience, can go a long way toward making life with a toddler more comfortable for everyone. Remember the following:

- *A tired, overwhelmed or overstimulated child is "set up" for tantrums.* Avoid situations that stress your toddler when he is tired, such as shopping trips. Instead, schedule them when he is

rested, and leave before things get out of hand.

- **Predictable routines for daily activities are important to small children.**

Establish a consistent schedule for meals, naps, bedtime, bathtime and playtime. Toys, furniture and play areas should be safe and allow the child to move, explore and make a mess. Children of this age are seldom able to play together or to share toys peacefully. Arrange your child's schedule and surroundings with his needs and limitations in mind.

- **Power struggles lead to tantrums.**

Whenever you can, let your toddler make his own choices (be sure either choice is okay with you): pink sweater or yellow coat; teddy bear or clown; apple juice or milk. Don't "sweat the small stuff," it isn't worth it. On important issues, your actions can be more effective than words; toddlers seldom understand "reasons."

Sometimes, simply substituting another toy or activity or using a toy as bait will work. Other times, you may need to assert your authority by moving the child bodily or taking something dangerous away from him. Never ask "Do you want to ...?" unless a "No" response is OK! Instead, try "Let's ... together" and carry out the activity with him.

- **A toddler is always testing the limits because learning what's expected takes time and practice.**

You can help by setting clear, consistent limits and reinforcing them courteously but firmly. Teach what is acceptable, and show what you mean – don't just talk about it. And, be prepared to do so over and over again. When the child does remember and act appropriately, notice this and show your approval.

- **When your child loses control, keep yours.**

Hitting back, harsh punishment, ridicule and cruel words make matters worse. If the situation allows, just walk into the next room. If you're away from home, you may need to carry the child to the car and wait with him until he can control himself. Some toddlers (not all) can accept up to five minutes (no more) in a time-out chair or corner. The idea is "no audience equals shorter tantrums." With experience you'll find what works best with your child. When the storm blows over, don't apologize or hold a

grudge. Be ready to show him that he's still loved and you're glad to have him back.

- **If you feel your self-control is slipping, be sure the child is in a safe environment (preferably in the care of another responsible person), then get away by yourself until you can get a firm grip on your emotions.**

Take a walk, take a shower, call a friend – whatever puts things back into perspective for you. If tantrums seem to be happening constantly, or if things seem to be getting worse, don't be reluctant to seek help. It sometimes happens that a child's outspoken anger or frustration triggers emotions that can be very disturbing to even the most caring parents. Don't deal with these problems alone; help is available. Call your health care provider or local health department about resources in your area.

## Hearing and Speech

The following checklist is a guide to normal hearing and speech development for an 18 to 24-month-old baby. As time goes by, check to see if your baby can do most of the things listed below:

- ✓ Searches for sounds in all directions
- ✓ By two years of age is starting to use two-word phrases, such as "Me go," "Mama bye-bye" or "Want drink"
- ✓ By age two years, parents can understand at least half of the child's talking
- ✓ Uses "Yes" and "No" by speaking or nodding and shaking his head
- ✓ Follows simple instructions with real objects such as "Get ball," "Push car" or "Throw ball"
- ✓ Sometimes repeats requests
- ✓ Asks 1 to 2 word questions like "more?", "where kitty?", or "go bye-bye?"

### Here are some suggestions for speech activities:

- Take your child with you when you visit the store, garage, or zoo, dig in the garden, plant seeds, etc. Talk about what you see when you're there, making sure your child is included in the activities. This may mean that you can't achieve as much as you would by yourself.
- Make sure you are a good speech model at all times – talk slowly, simply

and clearly. Give one direction at a time.

- Read simple picture books to him, pointing out the actions in the pictures.

### You can also stimulate your two-year-old child's speech and language by:

- repeating new words over and over.
- helping your child listen and follow instructions by playing games: "Pick up the ball," "Touch Daddy's nose."
- talking about what you are doing.
- playing music with your child.
- listening to your child when he is talking, never saying "I don't understand you."
- carrying on a conversation with him.
- asking questions to stimulate additional thought and language.

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Toddlers find comfort in consistency and order, things that they can count on.

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## Nutrition

At this age, toddlers do not accept new foods readily and it may take offering a new food as many as 15 times before they will accept them. In addition, toddlers may become "picky" and not eat very much. It is important for parents to not be alarmed and know that during this age toddlers are not growing as quickly. Despite being "picky" and changes in growth rates, parents need to encourage toddlers by role modeling healthy eating behaviors.

Children may need to eat frequently at this age because their stomachs are small and they need lots of energy for their activities. Because snacking becomes an important source of nutrition for children at this age, planning nutritious between meal snacks is important.

A nutritious snack should satisfy your child's hunger for at least a couple of hours. Foods you choose should contain some protein, carbohydrate, and fat. Most foods that are good for meals are also good choices for snacks.

When preparing snacks, choose foods from MyPlate: whole grain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, meats, and milk. Don't serve foods high in sugar and fat.

**Good ideas include the following combinations:**

- 1/4 bagel and 100% juice
- string cheese and mini bagels
- banana milkshake
- cheese and crackers
- fruit and yogurt with graham crackers
- milk and unsweetened cereal
- soft burritos with cheese & low-fat refried beans
- oatmeal cookies and milk
- soft vegetables (zucchini, cooked carrots) with cottage cheese dip
- zucchini bread and fruit slices
- pudding or applesauce

It is important to continue to offer a variety of foods. It is okay if they don't like it the first time. Keep trying every couple of weeks.

## Healthy Teeth

If you haven't already done so, give your child his own special toothbrush. It should be small and have soft bristles.

At first, you'll need to do most of the brushing for your child until he develops the necessary skills, usually at about age seven to eight. Use only a smear of toothpaste because toddlers don't spit well and will probably swallow it.

It's important that your child receives some form of daily fluoride (fluoridated water or fluoride supplements). The American Dental Association recommends that children receive adequate fluoride through 16 years of age.

A final reminder! If your child is still drinking from a bottle or sippy cup, wean him as quickly as possible to prevent baby bottle tooth decay.

## Toilet Training

Opinions about when and how to toilet train are much like noses – everybody has one. The age at which a child may be toilet trained is highly individual. In general, a parent and child will have better success if the task is not approached until at least 18 months of age. Even this may be too early for some children.

Age is not a reliable indicator of when a child is capable of being toilet trained. Instead, watch for the following signs that the basic skills needed for bowel and bladder control have developed.

**1. Muscle Control:** Voluntary control of specific muscles must be achieved before toilet training. Such muscle control usually exists once a child remains dry through his naps and occasionally through the night.

**2. Communication:** Children must be able to tell parents (by word or gesture) when they need to go to the bathroom. The children must be able to recognize and communicate "the need to go."

**3. Desire:** Getting rid of messy diapers is usually the parent's desire, not the child's. However, children want to please their parents and will imitate desired behavior. Children should imitate other behaviors and show a desire to place other things (such as toys) where they belong.

These three basic factors are usually present by about 2 1/2 years of age, sometimes earlier, but not before 18 months of age.



## Sleep

Parents have tried all kinds of strategies to get their children to take naps or go to bed without crying and struggling for hours. On one extreme, there are those parents who let their child cry himself to sleep, while others rock, hold and pick up the child every time he cries. Other parents simply let the child sleep in their bed. The middle of the road approach along with a reasonable bedtime routine seems to work best.

### CRYING

There is no simple solution to prevent bedtime crying, but there is a way to get

toddlers to sleep without crying too much. If your child cries after tucking him in, go back in five minutes and reassure him that everything is okay. Don't stay long or pick him up. If he's still crying five minutes later, go in again and repeat the same procedure. As your child begins to wear down, his cries will change to whimpers. Now, you need only return every 10 minutes. You'll find that after several nights, the crying periods will shorten.

### BEDTIME ROUTINE

Toddlers find comfort in consistency and order, things that they can count on. This is especially true with bedtime. A consistent time for going to bed and a regular bedtime routine will help your child sleep better.

A bedtime routine should have a period of unwinding. This may include a bath to relax your child, brushing teeth, selecting toys to sleep with, tucking in a stuffed animal, storytelling, a drink of water, kisses and hugs and a tuck-in.

You'll probably want to limit the number of items in the routine so you don't spend half the night getting your child to bed. Start the routine about 30 minutes before bedtime. Try not to rush or hurry. This makes it harder to create a peaceful mood.

### NAP TIME

There is a wide variation in the amount of daytime sleep toddlers need. Some toddlers still take two naps, while others are ready to give them up altogether. To help your toddler nap, follow some of the same steps you use during the nighttime routine.

You'll find that your child naps better when he has played actively, followed by a quiet time. Overstimulation and roughhousing make it harder for your child to fall asleep. Parents can try to arrange their schedules to let their child nap long enough so he'll be happy and have enough energy while he's awake.

Finally, don't send your toddler to bed as a punishment during the day. It may create unpleasant associations and he may reject his bed at nap time and at night. Find a better way to show your disapproval.

### SLEEPING WITH PARENTS

Children learn that they are separate individuals by sleeping in their own beds. Sleeping away from parents helps them learn that separating from parents is not an awful thing. It's good preparation for future separations, such as being left with