

Well Child Care at 15 Months

Nutrition

Your child should be learning to feed himself. He will use his fingers and maybe start using a spoon. This will be messy. Make sure to cut the food up into small pieces so your baby won't choke. Children still need nutritious snacks like cheese, fruit, and vegetables. Some nutritious desserts are baked apples or fresh fruit. Do not use food as a reward.

By now, most toddlers should be using a cup only. If your child is still using a bottle, it may start to cause problems with his teeth and might cause ear infections.

Development

Toddlers start to have temper tantrums at about this age. Trying to reason with or punish your child may actually make the tantrum last longer. It is best to make sure your toddler is in a safe place and then ignore the tantrum. You can best ignore by not looking directly at him and not speaking to him or about him to others when he can hear what you are saying.

Toddlers are very curious and want to be the boss. This is normal. If they are safe, this is a time to let your child explore new things. As long as you are there to protect your child, let him satisfy his curiosity. Stuffed animals, toys for pounding, pots, pans, measuring cups, empty boxes, and Nerf balls are some examples of toys your child may enjoy.

Toddlers may want to imitate what you are doing. Sweeping, dusting, or washing play dishes can be fun for children.

Reading to your child should be a part of every day. Children that have books read to them learn more quickly. Choose books with interesting pictures and colors.

Safety Tips

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Keep plastic bags, balloons, and small hard objects out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.
- Cut foods into small pieces. Avoid food on which a child might choke (popcorn, peanuts, hot dogs, chewing gum).

Prevent fires and burns:

- Keep lighters and matches out of reach.
- Don't let your child play near the stove.
- Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.

- Turn the water heater down to 120°F (49°C).

Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in the car.
- Use an approved toddler car seat correctly.
- Parents should wear seat belts.

Pedestrian Safety

Hold onto your child when you are around traffic. Supervise outside play areas.

Prevent Drowning

Continuously watch your child around any water, including toilets and buckets. Keep toilet seats down and store buckets upside down.

Poisons

Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, etc. locked away.

- Put the poison center number on all phones. The poison control number is 1-800-222-1222

Ask your doctor about syrup ipecac. Use it only if you are told to do so. Purchase all medicines in containers with safety caps.

Do not store poisons in drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

Immunizations

At the 15-month visit, your child may receive shots. Your child may run a fever and be irritable for about 1 day and may have soreness, redness, and swelling in the area where the shots were given. You may give acetaminophen drops (1 dropperful, or 0.8 ml, every 4 to 6 hours) to prevent fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed to provide comfort.

Call your child's physician if:

- Your child has a rash or any reaction to the shots other than fever and mild irritability.
- Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

If your child just got either the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) or the varicella vaccine, please note: A small number of children get a rash and fever 7 to 14 days after the shots. The rash usually occurs on the main body area and lasts 2 to 3 days.

Call your child's physician immediately if:

The rash changes to purple spots.

Call your physician within 24 hours if:

- The rash becomes itchy.
- The rash lasts more than 3 days.

Next Visit

Your child's next visit should be at the age of 18 months.

Normal Development: 15 Months Old

Here's what you might see your child doing between the ages of 15 and 18 months.

Daily Activities

- Avidly explores everything.

Revels in water play.

Likes to feed self.

- Begins to use more objects conventionally (comb in hair).

Enjoys throwing, rolling, pushing, pulling toys.

Motor Skills

- Stands unsupported.
- Walks without assistance with wide stance and outstretched arms.
- Climbs stairs with assistance.
- Refines grasp.
- Picks up objects from a standing position.

Language Development

- Adds gestures to speech.
- Prefers adults to other children.
- Likes to watch and imitate activities.

Cognitive (Thinking and Learning) Development

- Looks to parent for help in solving problems.
- Learns cause-effect relationship (repeats enjoyable actions).
- Looks for hidden objects in last place seen.
- Begins to experiment through trial and error.

Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones.

If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, check with your family physician.