

18 - 23 MONTHS OF AGE

SAFETY:

Car travel only in approved car seat. Use table mats instead of a table cloth. Tie up all loose, dangling cords, such as telephone cords. Place cleansers, detergents, bleaches, furniture polish, medicines, insecticides, etc., out of reach. Cover electrical outlets with safety caps or tape. Place candles out of reach. Don't leave the child unattended in the bathtub or wading pool. All medicines should be in tight safety capped bottles and are out of reach. Don't place razor blades, glass, and other harmful products in waste baskets. Stove controls should be out of the child reach. Set hot water heater at medium temperature (120-130 F). Keep the number of poison control by the phone. Check the batteries in the smoke alarms.

PLAYTIME:

Your 18 month old will love to be played with. Good toys for this age include blocks, balls, push and pull toys, pots and pans, and books. Cardboard or cloth books with large colorful pictures are best. Nursery rhyme books are favorites. Your child will enjoy being sung to, and may also enjoy a toy phone, wagon or toy tool or dish set.

The child is still learning much about the world around him. Allow the child to explore. Constantly saying "no-no" may stifle the child urge to learn. It is good to say "no" only for possible hazards. Whenever you need to take something away, give something else to replace it. Your child's emotional health is as important as physical health. As children grow and develop their own emotional reactions, they are very sensitive to the feelings between mother and father. Tension and misunderstanding between parents may lead to the development of emotional tension in your child. At 18 months, most children are self-centered. They will not understand sharing and will frequently fight with playmates. The child will frequently say "no" just to show independence. Attention span is very short and the child will run from one activity to another. Effective discipline at this age would be to ignore the child during temper tantrums, and time-out. Children at this age need regular routines to feel secure.

TEETH:

Tooth care is important. By this age your child should be weaned off the bottle. Continued use of the bottle will cause tooth decay in the upper, central teeth. Pacifiers should also be discontinued at this age before the child becomes attached to them, which will make the job even harder.

ELIMINATION:

The muscles for bowel and bladder control are not yet fully developed. The child may show interest in toilet training, but do not push too hard for fear of frustrating the child.

SLEEP:

At 18 months, most children still need an afternoon nap and sleep 12 hours at night. When he/she awakens at night, go to his/her bedroom and let the child know you are there. Do not reinforce the wakefulness by rocking, a drink, or continually going to his/her room. Do not let your child sleep in your bed or your room. He/she needs to learn that parents have a relationship that does not include him/her.

SPEECH:

Most children at this age say 10-12 words. They understand much more than they can express. Children learn to speak by listening, so talk to your child often using simple clear speech. Point out new objects and say the names. At this age they enjoy nursery rhymes and books.

DIET:

Growth is slower than at a younger age. It may appear that your child is not eating enough. They may choose only certain foods. But over the course of a week, they will generally receive enough food from each category. They should not drink more than 24 ounces of milk per day. Normally children need only 16 ounces of milk a day. Take a relaxed approach at mealtime.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Varivax (chicken pox vaccine) is given at this visit if it was not given previously, and if the child never had the chicken pox. Watch for fever or rash which can happen up to one week after this shot is given. Use Tylenol for fever and fussiness. The second dose of hepatitis A is also given at this time.