

## Well Child Care at 18 Months Old

### Diet

- Allow your child to eat with you during family meal times.
- Let your child feed him/herself. Give him/her a spoon and cup to use at meal times.
- Offer your child a variety of foods and snacks throughout the day such as fruits, vegetables and cheese. Avoid small hard foods.
- To prevent choking you should never feed your child hard foods such as hot dogs, apples, grapes or raw carrots. To find the nearest infant CPR class timings and locations call the Arlington chapter of the American Red Cross (703-527-3010, ext 736) or Virginia Hospital Center (705-558-2468). You may also sign up online at their website.
- Your toddler will not grow as fast in his/her second year of life. Trust your child's appetite.
- If you have well water, make sure your child gets fluoride from another source.
- Fruit juices are mostly sugar, and your child does not need them.

### Development

- Your child may begin walking up step and walking backwards. He/she may enjoy kicking and throwing a ball.
- Your child may be able to remove clothing by him/herself.
- Your child may scribble spontaneously.
- Your child may have a vocabulary of 10-15 words and may begin to combine 2-4 words. Practice pointing to pictures and having your child name what he/she sees. Your child may understand many words and be able to follow simple directions.
- Children at this can be very independent and stubborn. Children often say "no" and refuse to do what you want them to. It is important to help your child learn about rules and keep them safe.
- Most toddlers at 18 months are not yet showing signs that they are ready for toilet training. Praise your child when they report to you that they have wet or soiled their diaper as they are becoming aware that they prefer dryness. Allow your child to watch you or other family member use the toilet.
- Play interactive games with your child that involves singing, naming and reading.
- Your child may enjoy imitating what you are doing. Sweeping, dusting or washing play dishes can be fun for your child.
- Your child may show affection through hugging and kissing.
- Establish a regular routine for bed, bath and meals with a regular caregiver to allow your child to get used to his/her surroundings and develop trust.

## Hygiene

- Do not put Q-tips in the infant's ear canal. The outer ear may be cleaned with a Q-tip or washcloth.
- Brush your child's teeth with baby toothpaste every day. If he/she hasn't seen a dentist, you should make an appointment.

## Safety

- Every time you take your child in the car he/she must be properly restrained in a car seat. Never leave your child alone in the car. For more information, go to <http://www.aap.org/family/carseatguide.htm> or <http://www.nhtsa.gov> (search for "car seat").
- Reduce the temperature of your water heater to less than 120°F to avoid burns.
- As your child becomes more mobile it is important to prevent falls. Never leave your child unattended and always put up crib and play pen side rails. Make sure windows, especially above ground level, are closed.
- Be sure to "baby-proof" your house. Block off stairs; remove breakable objects; pad sharp corners; tie up curtain/blind strings; keep plants, medicines/vitamins, and cleaning supplies out of reach; and cover electrical outlets.
- If you have guns, make sure they are locked up and out of reach. Store the ammunition separately from the gun.
- In case of a poisoning emergency call 1-800-222-1222.

## Immunizations

- Your child will receive his/her next set of immunizations today.
- Your child may develop redness and pain for up to 48 hours at the injection site. He/she may also develop a fever.
- You may give ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol); ask your doctor for the dose.
- Please call if your child has any unusual symptoms, such as allergic reactions, high fever, weakness, crying for 3 hours, or if you have any concerns.

**Next Visit:** Your child's next routine visit will be at 2 years old.