Well Check: 18 months

*Toddlers want to learn what’s behind, under, and inside everything they see. They may try out aggressive behaviors. This is a good time to start calmly teaching simple rules for safety and behavior, without scolding.*

**Feeding your child**

Your child will learn healthy eating habits by watching you eat healthy foods.

- Offer new foods often, and try again with foods your child didn’t eat before. Your child’s likes and dislikes will change.
- Let your child decide when to stop eating.
- Let your child eat on their own, using a cup and a spoon. Don’t worry about spills and manners.
- Limit juice to 4 ounces a day. Juice has a lot of sugar, which is bad for teeth. Offer water instead.
- If you’re concerned about your child’s weight or eating habits, ask your doctor for advice.

**Keeping your child safe and well**

- **Make sure your child gets recommended immunizations on schedule.**
- **Be safe at home and other places.**
  - To prevent falls, keep gates at the top and bottom of stairs, put crib sides up, and lock windows and doors. Move furniture away from windows.
  - Never leave your child alone near water or in the bath. Always empty play pools, buckets, and tubs after use. Make sure pools have a locked fence around them and a pool cover.
  - Always hold your child’s hand when near a driveway or street or in a parking lot.
  - Have smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and an escape plan.

*At 18 months old, most children:*

- Walk alone, and can pull a toy while walking
- Can say several single words, and can follow 1-step spoken commands
- Point to show you something interesting
- Know what familiar things are used for, such as a brush, a spoon, and a telephone
- Show affection to familiar people, and may be afraid of strangers

Children will reach milestones at their own pace. For detailed information about milestones, visit [cdc.gov/actearly](http://cdc.gov/actearly), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

- Lock up dangerous items. These include medicines, poisons, chemicals, cigarettes, lighters, alcohol, and firearms.
- To prevent tip-over injuries, secure furniture.
- Prevent burns by keeping the water heater temperature below 120°F.
• Be safe in the car.
  – Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat in the middle of the back seat until your child is 2 years old or reaches the maximum height and weight for the seat. Never place your child’s car seat in a seat with an air bag.
  – When you do turn the car seat to face forward, keep it in the back seat. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully to keep it safe.
  – Make sure everyone in the car uses seat belts.
  – Never leave your child alone in a car.

Helping your child grow
• Make plenty of time for active play.
  – Your child learns through play. Spend time playing with your child, and allow play with others.
  – If you want to introduce digital media, such as TV or other screens, choose high-quality options.
  – Enjoy screen time together with your child because this is how they learn the best.

• Help your child learn to talk.
  – Use simple, clear words to talk to your child and tell them what you want them to do. Help your child learn words for their feelings.
  – Read to your child every day.

Follow-up appointment
Your next well-child visit will be when your baby is 2 years old.
Date: ____________ Time: ____________

Here are some helpful resources in the meantime:

For more age-appropriate safety information, visit safekids.org and sign up for the monthly newsletter.
If you need help with housing, food, or if you feel unsafe at home, call 2-1-1, or visit 211ut.org for community services.

When should I call?
If you think your child may have eaten poisons, medicines, or cleaning supplies, call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Help your child learn good behavior.
  – Your child may be starting to try out new behaviors such as hitting, biting, and pushing. Make a few important behavior rules, such as “only nice touch.” Be consistent about the rules, and be an example of responding calmly.
  – Praise your child for good behavior.
  – To show your child a behavior is wrong, turn your face away and don’t give your attention.
  – Most children don’t understand sharing yet, so it’s okay to not expect your child to share at this age.
  – Give your child choices. Allow your child to choose between 2 good options.

Start preparing for toilet training.
  – Most children aren’t ready for toilet training at this age. Signs they are ready include knowing when they are wet, knowing when they are about to have a bowel movement, and wanting to learn.
  – Your child may be interested in the toilet before being ready to use it. Buy a toddler potty and let your child sit on it (with or without clothes on). Read books about toilet training. Let your child watch family members use the toilet.

Help your child learn good sleep habits.
  – Put your child to bed at the same time every night. If awakened in the night, offer a blanket or toy, but don’t get them out of bed.
  – Your child needs 11 to 14 hours of sleep a day at this age (including nap time). Some children need 1 or 2 naps, while others don’t need any.