

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR 15 MONTH-OLDS

VACCINES:

- * DTaP #4 - prevents diphtheria, tetanus (“Lock-jaw”), and pertussis (“Whooping Cough”). DTaP may cause fever and soreness; acetaminophen (Tylenol, Feverall, and store brands) may help.
- * Hib #4 – (Haemophilus influenzae type b) - prevents Hib bacteria, a germ that causes severe infections like meningitis, airway (throat) infections, blood infections (“sepsis”), and even ear infections.
- * HAV #1 – prevents hepatitis A, a virus that causes severe liver infection and is spread through contaminated food and water.

- * The Hib and HAV vaccines are generally well-tolerated, and most children do not experience side effects from them. When side effects do occur, they are usually mild. If you have concerns, please call us.

- * Flu vaccine may be offered during the months of October – March.

SCREENING TESTS:

Usually no tests are required. If not already done, some toddlers at this age may have a tuberculosis skin test (for “TB” – also called the “PPD test”). This is only done for certain children who may be at higher risk of TB. New patients and others at higher risk may have screening tests for anemia (either a hemoglobin level or complete blood counts) or lead poisoning.

DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:

Your toddler is becoming an explorer!

Speech/language:

- * 15 month old toddlers can follow simple commands (e.g. "Show me your nose").
- * Toddlers of this age say Mama and Dada (or Papa) to the right person; usually they know three to six words.
- * Toddlers of this age will point to express themselves and try to get your attention.
- * In the next few months, by 18 months of age, nearly all toddlers will begin to learn new words and become more expressive. Help him along by talking in short sentences, teaching new words, using words to describe her gestures, and describing feelings.

Physical ability:

- * Most 15 month old toddlers can walk alone and stoop down. Some may be able to climb stairs one at a time while holding your hand.
- * Your toddler should be starting to feed himself using a spoon or his fingers and should be drinking only from cups (regular or “sippy cups;” no more bottles!!). Don’t be surprised if she makes a mess. You can help spoon some food into the right place, his mouth! Be patient with messes.
- * Some toddlers will begin to scribble with a crayon.
- * In the next few months, by 18 months of age, most toddlers will be starting to run well and climb stairs while holding a hand or railing. Your toddler will develop better finger control and be able to feed herself with a fork or scribble with a pencil or crayon. Many will be able to kick a ball or stack multiple blocks.

Social/ play:

- * Most 15 month olds love to play peek-a-boo. This actually teaches an important skill: learning that objects still exist even when you can’t see them. At this age, some will know how to say “hi” or “bye” and enjoy hugs and kisses; make a game of it!
- * Toddlers love picture books! They enjoy looking at books and pointing to objects as you describe the picture. This should become a fun and important part of the bedtime routine (after tooth brushing) and can be used to teach new words.
- * Toddlers also learn by copying behaviors that they see around them, especially things around the house like playing with pots and pans or safe kitchen utensils.
- * Toddlers also will become more social and physical. Give your child opportunities to play outdoors. (Remember that safety and supervision are important at all times, especially on the playground). At home, blocks and stacking toys, nesting toys and things that can be opened and closed will be enjoyed.
- * In the next few months, by 18 months of age, your toddler will continue to expand his social skills. Saying “hi” and “bye” and engaging with people will become routine. She will begin to enjoy being outdoors at the playground with slides, ramps, and climbing structures and being around other children.

Behavior:

- * Your toddler will become more independent and love to explore. He will test you to see what behaviors you will tolerate. Get ready for “No!” At around 15-18 months, this starts to become a favorite word as toddlers try to define themselves as individuals. This is called “oppositional behavior.”
- * Setting limits consistently is very important. When your toddler is misbehaving, try distracting her with something he likes.

Remember: you set the rules. Be consistent but flexible. Let your toddler make choices within the limits or rules that you set. Discipline should be about teaching, not punishment.

- * Toddlers love being praised!! Saying things like “Yeah! That’s great!” or “You did it!” can reinforce good behavior and accomplishments. You will teach your toddler what is expected of him or her.
- * In the next few months, by 18 months of age, your toddler may continue to be shy around strangers and when separated from you. Your toddler may find it easier to adjust to new environments if you stay with him for the first few times. At the same time, toddlers will increasingly want to do things for themselves and often will say “No” or have temper tantrums. Try not to overreact when this happens. By giving any kind of emotional response (either anger or concern), you will reinforce temper tantrums. If you find yourself getting very angry or frustrated, take a few minutes to calm down before responding to your child. You can limit the need for your child to say no or have a tantrum by ensuring that his or her play environment is safe and includes choices for play toys and distraction.

NUTRITION and EATING BEHAVIORS:

- * By now, most children should be drinking whole milk (not low-fat milk) with meals. Offer sugar-free drinks, preferably water, when thirsty at other times. Unless your child drinks 32 ounces or more of milk fortified with vitamin D every day, she will need extra vitamin D. For children who cannot drink milk, be sure that alternatives like soy milk are fortified with vitamin D. If you have concerns that your child is not getting enough vitamin D, please ask us.
- * Avoid juice: one cup per day is enough. At other times give milk or water in a cup or sippy cup. No more bottles.
- * Sleeping with a bottle (or even a sippy cup) of formula, milk, or juice will cause cavities in your child’s teeth and prevent him or her from learning to sleep through the night. No more bottles.
- * At this point, your child can eat most foods. Try to serve your child the same foods that you eat. Avoid making separate meals for your toddler.
- * Make sure your toddler is sitting at the table with the family for meals and learning to use a spoon and fork. Remember that toddlers will still like to use their fingers so be careful that pieces of food are small enough to avoid choking. Avoid small, hard foods like peanuts and candy that are choking hazards.
- * In the next few months your child may seem not to be eating enough. Don’t worry! Toddlers grow slower than infants. As long as

the child's growth and blood counts are good, she is eating enough of the right foods. Nutrition in the second year is about QUALITY, not QUANTITY. If you haven't already stopped using baby bottles, do so **now**. Usually stopping the bottle all at once works better than trying to slowly decrease their use. You may need to offer something in place of the bottle - sitting with your child while she drinks from the cup is often helpful. Be sure to be introducing new foods and teaching healthy eating habits, particularly with snacks.

HYGIENE:

- * Most toddlers will have some teeth by now. You should be brushing your toddler's teeth before bed. Ideally, start trying to brush after breakfast and even lunch, too. You can start using a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste once daily. If you have any concerns about your child's teeth, consider taking him/her to see a dentist. (Pediatric dentists will like to see toddlers as soon as they have teeth).
- * Drink your tap water! Most of the towns in our area have clean and safe tap water that comes from state reservoirs. This water contains fluoride to make your teeth strong. If you're not sure about your town's water supply or whether it has fluoride, ask your child's doctor. Bottled water usually is NOT necessary.

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * Always have a mature adult supervising your child.
- * Never leave your toddler unattended in or near water, even the bathtub.
- * Avoid choking hazards. Anything that can fit through a roll of toilet paper is too small for a toddler to play with.
- * Toddlers will climb and grab things. Be careful not to leave hot liquids within reach: pots with handles on the stove, hot cups of coffee, etc... Keep toddlers away from fireplaces, space heaters, and other small appliances like clothes and curling irons. Keep flammable items like matches and lighters locked up or out of reach.
- * Keep all medicines, poisons, and cleaning supplies stored in an upper, locked cabinet.

>>>POISON CONTROL CENTER: 1-800-222-1222<<<

(Call this number if your child eats something that might be dangerous.)

- * Always use a car seat. Toddlers should ride in a car seat that faces the rear of the car until two years of age. Make sure to use a toddler-sized car seat. Most children this age will be too big for

- their infant seats. The middle of the back seat is the safest location. Toddlers should ALWAYS ride in the back seat.
- * Well-fitting safety gates on all stairways will prevent falls.
 - * You can prevent falls by putting window guards on upper story windows that can be reached by your child. Avoid putting beds or sofas next to windows on upper floors. Remember: KIDS CAN'T FLY.
 - * Find out if there are lead hazards in your home. If you rent an apartment, your landlord should know. Ask your child's us if you have questions about this.
 - * No smoking in the house! We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. Even the smoke on your clothes, hair, and breath can affect your child. Ask us for information on how to quit.

NEXT VISIT: age 18 months for a check-up/physical and as needed for other problems, illnesses, and injuries

We will talk about language and other development, behavioral challenges, nutrition, and safety concerns. Think about questions and try to write down three to ask us. Remember to bring the list with you!

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

The internet can be an excellent source of information on child health and development. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.

Check out *Bright Futures* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Other%203/B.ECh.PH.15month.pdf>

Check out *Healthy Children* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

www.healthychildren.org/

Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for parent resources at:

<http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx>

Find us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CHAPediatrics>

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