

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR 2 YEAR-OLDS

VACCINES:

- * Hepatitis A #2. This vaccine is for a virus that causes severe liver infections and is spread through contaminated food and water.
- * Influenza #1 (flu) - prevents influenza, a serious viral illness (given during flu season only, typically Oct-March). May be given as an injection or a nasal spray.

- * Most children do not get serious side effects from these vaccines. If side effects occur they are usually mild. Fever and discomfort at the injection site are common. Acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) can help. If you have concerns, please call us.

SCREENING TESTS:

- * Complete Blood Counts (CBC) or Hemoglobin (Hgb) – a test for anemia, or low red blood cell counts. In children, anemia usually is from not eating foods with enough iron.
- * Lead level (Pb) – a test for lead poisoning. Please let us know if your home has lead paint or other lead hazards in it.

DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:

Your child is getting older and becoming more independent. This is an exciting and challenging time for parents.

Here are some developmental milestones and parenting tips for typical two-year-olds:

Speech/language:

- * Most two year old children can say at least 20 words. They also are starting to put two words together into simple phrases (“get up!” or “more milk!”) They can complete sentences and rhymes in favorite books.
- * Two year olds can now follow 2 step commands and understand more and more of what you say.
- * In the next few months, your child’s vocabulary will continue to expand and by age 3 most children can speak in simple sentences. Try to read to your child every day.

Physical ability:

- * Most two year olds can start to make lines and circles with crayons. They can also turn the pages in a book and use a cup and spoon well.

- * Your two year old should be able to go up and down stairs one step at a time. They also are able to jump up and down.
- * By age three, your child will start to be able to dress and undress, pedal a tricycle and draw clear lines and circles.

Social/play:

- * Most two year olds like being in small groups of children but often will play by themselves within the group. They are starting to work on taking turns with toys. Two year olds usually are able to play by themselves for only 15 minutes or less.
- * Many two year olds like to copy what they see around them. They often pretend to do household chores and “help” sweep or vacuum.
- * In the coming months your child’s play will become more imaginative and they will be able to play more with their friends.

Behavior:

- * Two year old children are becoming more independent. They can become easily frustrated and may need your help to calm down. It is a good idea to teach your child ways of getting over difficult emotions such as taking a time out, taking some deep breaths or talking about their feelings.
- * Many two year old children are “oppositional.” This means they will often say “no” to you and resist your directions. This is normal behavior. Using distraction and offering choices often will help.
- * Give your child choices between two good things in snacks, books or toys.
- * Two year old children do really well with having consistent routines for daily meals, naps and bedtime. Setting up these routines makes children feel safe. All family members should have the same rules.
- * Toddlers love their parents’ attention. Hug and hold your child often and praise them for things that they do well.
- * Be sure to set limits with your toddler and gently correct bad behavior.

NUTRITION and EATING BEHAVIORS:

- * Enjoy meals together as a family when possible.
- * Two year olds should drink skim or low fat (1%) milk. They no longer should be using a bottle. Other than milk, we recommend that children drink water, not juice. Though it is common to give toddlers juice, juice has a lot of sugar and is not as healthy as eating fruit or drinking water. Tap water is safe to drink and also has fluoride, which is good for healthy teeth.
- * For children who cannot drink milk, be sure that alternatives like soy milk are fortified with vitamin D. Toddlers who do not drink at

least 32 ounces of milk fortified with vitamin D each day will need extra vitamin D. If you have concerns that your child is not getting enough vitamin D, she may benefit from a multivitamin or vitamin D supplement.

- * Many children seem as if they are not eating enough. As long as the child's growth and blood counts are good, try not to worry! Toddlers grow more slowly than infants. Two year olds often seem as if they are not eating as many types of foods as they did when they were younger. This is common and should change as they get older. Continue to offer your child a variety of healthy foods at each meal. Keep meals simple with just a few different types of food on the plate.

HYGIENE:

- * You should be brushing your toddler's teeth before bed and after breakfast. Try brushing after lunch, too. Use a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste once daily and a brush with soft bristles. Now is the time to schedule your child's first appointment to see a dentist. Ask us if you need a recommendation on where to go.
- * Many two year olds are starting to show interest in toilet training. Signs of being ready for toilet training are: staying dry for 2 hours, knowing if she is wet or dry, being able to pull pants up and down, and telling you if he is going to have a bowel movement BEFORE it happens. When you start toilet training, dress your child in clothing that can easily be removed. Place your child on the toilet every 1-2 hours. Many toddlers like to have their own "potty seat" that you can put wherever they may be, not necessarily the bathroom. Others, particularly those with older brothers or sisters, may prefer the type of potty seat that fits onto a regular toilet. Be patient with this process and praise your child when he is successful. Many children are not fully trained until 3 years of age. For more information on potty training, see <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/default.aspx>

TELEVISION and your child:

- * It is better for toddlers to play than watch TV. Limit TV and other screen time to no more than 1 hour per day. That includes computer, video, and gaming.
- * Be careful about the TV shows and ads your child sees. Your toddler can learn bad behavior from TV. Do other activities with your child such as reading, playing games, and singing.
- * Be active together as a family. Make sure your child is active while in the house, at day care, and with babysitters. Try to let your child play outside even in cold weather.

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * Always have a mature adult supervising your child.
- * Never leave your toddler unattended in or near water, even the bathtub.
- * Make sure electrical cords and outlets are secured.
- * 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 irons and curling irons. Keep flammable items like matches and lighters locked up or out of reach.
- * Avoid choking hazards. Anything that can fit through a roll of toilet paper is too small for a toddler to play with.
- * 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. It can be facing forward now. The middle of the back seat is the safest location. There should be no more than a finger's width of space between your child's collarbone and the harness strap. Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.
- * Have your child wear a well-fitting helmet on bikes and tricycles.
- * 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.
- * Limit time in the sun. Put a hat and sunblock on your child before going outside.
- * Avoid smoking in the house. We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. There are many resources at Cambridge Health Alliance to help you. Please ask your provider about this if you are interested in more information.

NEXT VISIT: age 3 years for a check-up/physical and as needed for other problems, illnesses, or injuries

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.2yr.pdf>

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Other%203/B.ECh.PH.2.5yr.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:

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