

Things You Should Know: Your Baby 12-17 months

DIET

Breastfed Babies

- If mom is breastfeeding, she may continue to do this, but she needs to get at least 1000mg of calcium daily to help with her bone health. If mom is weaning the baby from the breast, whole milk should be given because it has fat and cholesterol which are important for brain growth. At 12 months of age your baby should be drinking from a cup not a bottle. Breast fed babies should continue to receive a vitamin D supplement daily.

Babies Who Are Not Breastfeeding

- At 12 months of age your baby should be weaned from the bottle to a cup and from formula to whole milk. Your baby should drink whole milk because it has fat and cholesterol which are important for brain growth. The average daily milk intake is 24 ounces. It should be offered in a cup at mealtimes.

All Babies

- Most babies are eating solids by now. The average for a 1 year old is half table foods and half baby foods. Increase table foods as the baby can tolerate. Always cut table food into tiny pieces. You still may need to puree foods such as meats, but you can offer tiny pieces of chicken, fish, shaved ham or finely ground beef. Small pieces of pasta and cheese are also a favorite.
- **Avoid giving the following foods to children under 3-4 years of age to prevent choking: hot dogs (if you do give them, cut them into thin circles, then each circle into fourths), grapes, nuts, apples, carrots and other raw vegetables, popcorn and hard candy.**
- Your child should be sitting down while eating. Your child can choke on anything.
- By one year of age, they should be feeding themselves well. Your baby should start using a spoon around 12 to 15 months, and a fork once the baby is using the spoon well.
- If your child is not a big milk drinker, then cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese can be good sources of calcium and vitamin D. Children who do not get 3-4 servings of dairy per day should take a vitamin D supplement every day.
- **Do not give your child soda.** It takes calcium from the bones and causes tooth decay.
- **Do not give your child juice. It has too much sugar. It is better to offer water and fruit instead of juice.**
- Limit the amount of candy and sweets.
- **Try to have regular family meals at the kitchen table.**
- A decrease in appetite is common at this age. In most cases, children can decide how much to eat. Avoid arguments with your child about how much food to eat. Many children at this age have particular likes and dislikes.
- If the child's food is warmed in a microwave, the food must be stirred well to avoid "hot spots."
- Children should not have too much fat, salt or sugar in their diet.

SLEEP PATTERNS

- Adequate sleep is very important. At this age, children need 11-14 hours of sleep per day including naps. Many toddlers still take 1-2 naps a day. A quiet “rest time” is useful for both parents and child even if the child does not sleep.
- **Follow a regular bedtime routine at the same time each night.** A regular bedtime routine will help your child move from active play to quiet time and rest. An object such as a favorite toy or blanket may be helpful. Having plenty of time for bath and bedtime stories will also make bedtime less of a struggle.
- **Put your baby to bed in his or her own room.**
- **Put your child in bed awake without a bottle or pacifier.** Do not put the child to sleep by rocking, feeding or other methods. Babies who are put to sleep in this manner will not easily be able to fall back asleep when they wake up at night. A period of quiet time such as rocking, singing or reading is encouraged before bedtime to allow children to relax.
- **If your baby wakes up at night and does not go back to sleep on his or her own within 15 or 20 minutes, you may go in to check for signs of illness but do not turn on the light, pick up the baby or feed the baby. Let your baby know that it is nighttime and that you will see him or her in the morning. It is okay to let your baby cry. This will not cause harm or emotional problems.**
- It is important to remember that parents need quiet time without kids too. Getting your kids to bed early will leave part of the evening for you to relax and have quality time.
- Dreams may start around this age, so do not be alarmed if your child wakes up crying in the night for no apparent reason. It is best to go comfort your child in bed and give reassurance that all is well. You might want to rest with your child for a few minutes, but don't fall into the habit of having your presence required for the child to fall back asleep.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- **Talk and read to your toddler often to encourage language skills.** Start pointing out objects and encourage your child to say the word. By 15 months most children have 5-10 words.
- Receptive language skills (meaning that they understand you) come faster than expressive skills (speech).
- Screen time does not help your baby learn. **Children under 18 months of age should not have any screen time except video chatting with an adult.**

POTTY TRAINING

- Toilet training should be put off until the child is about 2 years old. Toddlers often become interested in watching their parents or older siblings using the toilet. At that time it is wise to buy a child-sized potty and allow the child to practice sitting on it with a diaper in place.

TEETHING

- To help make your baby more comfortable, use teething rings. Avoid numbing gels such as Orajel. These products can numb the gag reflex and cause choking.
- **When teeth come in, brush them twice a day with a dab of fluoride toothpaste.**
- **Letting your child carry a cup of milk or sweet drink around during the day or take a cup to bed can cause cavities.**

- **If your child has teeth, schedule the first dental appointment at one year of age and see a dentist every 6 months thereafter.**

DIAPER RASH

- Diaper rashes are usually caused by being left in wet or dirty diapers too long. When rash appears, change diapers more often and apply Desitin, Vaseline or A&D ointment as needed.

SAFETY

This is a time when your child is exploring, climbing and getting into everything. Encourage this behavior by having a cabinet or drawer that is safe for them to explore. To help prevent injuries:

- **ALWAYS use a car seat. Your child must remain rear facing in the car seat.** Make sure your child fits the weight and height limits of the seat. See our Car Seat Guidelines handout for further details.
- Use security gates or lock the doors at stairwells and entrances to potentially dangerous areas such as the kitchen or basement. Window guards should be installed.
- Do not underestimate your child's ability to climb. Chairs should be positioned so that the child is unable to use them to climb to a dangerously high place. Make sure to lower the mattress to prevent your child from climbing out of the crib.
- Guns in the home are a danger to the family. If a gun is kept in the home, the gun and the ammunition should be locked and stored in separate locations.
- Small children should not be allowed to play with plastic bags or balloons.
- Children should always be closely supervised in or near the water (swimming pool, bathtub, uncovered toilet seat, bucket of water).
- Keep your child away from hot stoves, space heaters, wall heaters, irons, curling irons and fireplaces. Pot handles should be turned toward the back of the stove. Hot liquids on tablecloths or on top of the stove should be closely monitored so they can't be pulled down.
- No one should hold or carry the child while drinking hot liquids or smoking.
- The hot water heater temperature should not be set above 120 °F.
- Plug outlets with plastic guards.
- **Children should wear hats and protective clothing and use sunscreen when going outside. Use a sunscreen that is "broad spectrum" with at least an SPF of 15. Apply the sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside.**
- Protect your child from sharp edges. Pad the corners of tables, fireplaces and furniture.
- Attach heavy furniture, such as bookshelves or dressers to the wall. These items could crush a child if they tip over. Kits to secure these items are available or "L" brackets can be installed.
- Keep all medicine, cleaning supplies and any potentially harmful substances up and out of reach in a locked cabinet. Remember there are many items in your purse or grandma's purse that may be harmful. Many medications are brightly colored and may look like candy to your child.
- Keep the Poison Control Center number near your phone. **1-800-366-8888**
- Keep all outside gates and fences closed. Check to see if they are in good condition with no holes or sharp edges where the child could get caught.

- Have working smoke detectors and a simple fire safety plan where your family will meet outside.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended.
- Never leave your child unattended in the car or at home.
- Your child should be closely supervised when outside.
- **Exposure to cigarette smoke causes many medical problems for your baby. These include an increased number of upper respiratory infections (colds), asthma and ear infections. E-cigarettes, vaping and marijuana use can also cause harmful effects to your baby.**

DISCIPLINE

This is a time for your child to gain confidence and independence. Discipline and positive reinforcement are very important. **Starting to enforce your rules and setting limits is very important at this age. Children like structure. Setting limits and having rules are part of that structure.** Having structure makes children feel loved and teaches them that there are expectations for each member of the family.

- Try not to only respond to negative behaviors but **praise your child's good behavior**. Tell them what they did right. This will help build self-esteem.
- **Be consistent because your child will test your limits daily.**
- "Time outs" are usually an effective form of discipline and should consist of one minute for each year of life. Don't bring up bad behavior after time out is over. Drop it.
- **Temper tantrums are common. Ignore them.** Do not give in to the demands of the tantrum.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL CHILD VISITS

- We would like to see your baby in the office at 15 months, 18 months and 2 years for well child checks.
- At the 12 month check your baby will receive the following vaccines: MMR, chicken pox and Hepatitis A. At this visit your baby will also be checked for lead and anemia.
- At the 15 month visit your baby will receive the following vaccines: DTaP, Hib and Prevnar.
- At the 18 month appointment your child will receive the Hepatitis A vaccine. There are no routine scheduled vaccines at age 2 years.
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for all infants 6 months and older.
- Call the office immediately if your baby appears to develop a severe reaction after shots are given. If fever or fussiness lasts longer than 2-3 days, call us.

Please do not hesitate to call or text our office if you have any questions or concerns!