

YOUR 15 TO 18 MONTH OLD

POINTS TO REMEMBER

SAFETY

- **ALWAYS** make sure your child's car safety seat is properly installed in the back seat according to the manufacturer's instruction and the vehicle owner's manual. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride. **DO NOT** switch your child to forward-facing car safety seat before they are at least 1 year old and weigh at least 20 pounds. **REMEMBER** your child's safety depends on you. Always use your safety belt too. **NEVER** leave your child alone in a vehicle. **NEVER** leave your child alone with a pet or another young child.
- **KEEP** cigarettes, lighters, matches, and alcohol out of your child's sight and reach.
- **ALWAYS CLOSELY WATCH** your child when he/she is around water. **NEVER** leave your child alone or trust another young child to supervise him/her around water (i.e. bathtub, mop water, bathroom commode, and swimming pools). Empty mop water, bathtubs, and swimming pools immediately after use.
- **INSTALL** smoke detectors on every level of your home. **CHANGE** the batteries twice a year when the time changes in the spring and fall. **DEVELOP** an escape plan in the event of a fire in your home.
- **CONTINUE TO KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE.** Use safety locks on cabinets. Keep medicine and poisonous products in a safe, secure, locked place. Be sure there are childproof caps on all medications. If your child accidentally takes medication, or puts a poisonous product in his/her mouth, call the **POISON HOTLINE 1-800-722-5725**.
- **IF IT** is necessary to keep a gun in your home, it should be stored unloaded and locked, with the ammunition locked separately from the gun. The best way to keep your child safe from injury or death from guns is to never have a gun in your home.
- **PLACE** plastic safety plugs in electrical sockets and make sure electrical wires, electric cords, outlets, and all appliances are protected from your child. Keep your child away from peeling paint.
- **NEVER UNDER ESTIMATE** the power of a 15-18 month old child to climb. **ALWAYS CLOSELY WATCH** your child around stairs, and place gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Place the crib mattress as low as it will go in the baby bed.
- **GET DOWN ON THE FLOOR** at your baby's eye level to look for hazards (coins, button, ropes, curtain or mini-blind cords, pins or needles, pencils or ballpoint pens, sharp or rough edges of furniture).
- **ALWAYS** check the bath water with your wrist to make sure the water is not too hot before putting your child in the bathtub. The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **WHEN COOKING, ALWAYS** turn pan handles toward the back of the stove. **KEEP** your child away from hot stoves, space heaters, curling irons, wood stoves, fireplaces, and candles.
- **NEVER** leave heavy objects or hot liquids close to the edge of a table or on tablecloths where there is a danger your child could get the edge of the tablecloth and pull it down.
- **CHECK** toys for small or damaged parts, and do not allow your child to play with toys with rough, broken or sharp edges. **DO NOT** allow your child to play with latex balloons, plastic bags or marbles.
- **IF** you or your child is experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse, **TELL** your health care provider or call the **ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-752-6200** for help.

NUTRITION

- **FEED** your child at family mealtimes and **OFFER** him/her two to three nutritious snacks a day.
- **GIVE YOUR CHILD** snacks rich in complex carbohydrates (a slice of whole grain bread or crackers), and limit foods high in sugar and fat such as candy, soft drinks and chips.
- **IF** your child is taking a bottle, it is important to begin weaning now.

- **ASK** your health care provider about the WIC program

HEALTHY TEETH

- **CHILDREN** this age do not yet have the hand coordination to clean their own teeth well. Brush the child’s teeth twice a day (after breakfast and before bed) with a soft toothbrush and **PLAIN WATER** to help with healthy teeth. **FLOURINATED TOOTHPASTE** is only recommended when the child can successfully spit it out!
- **DO NOT** put your child to bed with a bottle.
- **SCHEDULE** your toddler’s first dental visit if it has not already occurred.

CARE and INTERACTIONS

- **PRAISE** your child for good behavior and show affection. Pick your child up, cuddle, hug and talk to him/her.
- **TEACH** language development by reading books, singing songs, and talking about what you and your child are seeing and doing together.
- **LIMIT** the number of family rules and consistently enforce them. **MAKE** consistent rules for all the family members (bedtime, teeth brushing, meal time and naps).
- **TEACH** about physical activity. **LIMIT** the amount of television your child watches to 1-2 hours per day.
- **USE DISCIPLINE** as a method of teaching and protecting, not a punishment. To discipline a child, use distraction, gentle reminders or the removal of an object. If necessary, remove the child for a time-out from the situation and what is bothering him/her. **DISCOURAGE** your child from hitting, biting and other aggressive behaviors.
- **DO NOT** begin toilet training too early. **DISCUSS** details of toilet training with the health professional at the next visit.

GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT

The following milestones are typical for babies as they develop.

<u>A 15 MONTH OLD CHILD</u>	<u>AN 18 MONTH OLD CHILD</u>
Has a vocabulary of 3-6 words	Has a vocabulary of 15-20 words
Feeds self with fingers, drinks from a cup	Feeds himself with spoon or fork
Listens to a story	Mimics words and objects
Walks well, stoops, climbs stairs, can stack 2 blocks	Walks backwards, runs stiffly, throws a ball
Indicates what he/she wants by pointing, grunting, or pulling	Shows affection and blows kisses
Makes gestures and imitates activities of others	Scribbles and imitates drawing with crayons

Reference: Hagan JF, Shaw JS, Duncan PM, eds. 2008: Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision and Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.