

Well Baby Visit

2 Year Visit

Weight _____ Height _____

Diet:

The toddler's rate of growth slows down in the second year, so the two-year-old often eats less than he or she did a year ago. A good rule of thumb for the two-year-old is one good meal every day or two. So long as weight gain is progressing well, don't be concerned about the actual amount your child eats--just take advantage of the times when he or she is interested by offering nutritious foods. Instead of striving for the often-unattainable goal of three square meals a day, aim for a balanced diet over the course of a week. Many toddlers get picky and refuse certain foods or go on food "jags", becoming quite restricted in the variety they'll eat. A chewable vitamin with iron is good "insurance" for the child who isn't eating some vegetables three or four times a week or refuses meat. Encourage at least two servings of calcium-rich foods -- milk, cheese, yogurt, macaroni and cheese, soups made with milk, or calcium-fortified juice -- a day.

Development:

Two-year-olds are busy and curious--fearless explorers of the world around them. Motor coordination is much more advanced than at eighteen months. They rarely walk when they can run, can often walk up and down stairs holding on, and may be especially fond of climbing. They may seem clumsy as they get carried away by their own momentum and enthusiasm and trip or collide with obstacles. Coordination in the fingers is getting more precise. Toddlers love to scribble (with supervision) and may attempt small one-piece puzzles and stack blocks in a tower. Developing fine motor coordination also enables two-year-olds to remove some of their clothes, especially shoes and socks, although skill in dressing lags far behind. Language skills are quite variable at this age. Two to three word "telegraphic" sentences are typical, like "Daddy bye-bye" or "Mommy juice" (or "Mommy juice NOW"). The two-year-old can understand much more than he or she can express spontaneously, and should be able to follow a request that has two parts to it, like " go get your shoes and bring them to Daddy".

The chief issue in the emotional development in the two-year-old is developing a sense of autonomy, a sense of "self" as distinct from "others" and increasing self-sufficiency and independence. This is often manifested by negativism and stubbornness, and an insistence on doing things independently. This may be expressed verbally; words like "No!" and "mine" remind the toddler and others that she is an individual who likes to make her own decisions. This negativism can also be expressed physically-- with tantrums, biting, and resistance. In general, the less effective this behavior is in getting attention from parents, the less frequent and prolonged the tantrums will be. Sometimes offering the toddler more decision-making opportunities can decrease the automatic negative response to a request. Offering a choice between two pairs of pants, or which goes on first-- shirt or pants, and choices between other options acceptable to the parent, can increase the toddler's sense that he's got a say in things and "short-circuit" the negativism. Going hand in hand with the increasing independence in the two-year-old are times of increased dependence and uncertainty. Sudden changes in mood are common at this age, and the toddler

who boldly refuses all adult assistance and support can suddenly revert to a clingy, teary bundle needing extra reassurance.

Toilet training:

Readiness for toilet training develops somewhere around the age of two, give or take year or so. The training process will be easiest and shorter if started when the child is ready. Intellectual readiness includes an understanding of the purpose of the potty and the ability to communicate the need to use the toilet. Physical signs of readiness include the ability to recognize the urge to have a bowel movement or the sensation of a full bladder. Noticing that their diaper is wet or soiled usually precedes any prior physical warning. Waking up dry after a nap signals an increase in the bladder capacity. Watch for signs that your child is aware of the physical sensations of elimination, such as grabbing at the diaper or squatting in the corner, and label it for him or her (Are you going pee?). Emotional readiness includes the ability to follow requests and the motivation to learn to stay dry and clean.

When your child is showing signs of readiness, you can start introducing the potty-chair. Once your child is comfortable sitting on the potty with clothes on--make this a pleasant time, with stories or social time--you can try without pants or diapers. Success is more likely if you try after a meal, if she wakes up dry after a nap, or is showing any of the signs of elimination. Praise any cooperation with sitting and trying, whether successful or not at first. Limit sessions to about 5 minutes, and don't push the issue if you're meeting with refusal. If nothing is happening after 3 or 4 days of trying, put the potty chair away and try again in a couple of months. Avoid scolding for "accidents", but be generous with praise for even partial successes, like sitting on the potty.

Discipline:

The toddler years are a time for much learning about appropriate, and inappropriate, ways of behaving. Just as the toddler is exploring and learning about the things in his world, he's trying out different ways of interacting with the people around him. Through the responses of the important people in his world, the toddler learns how to behave.

Reasoning and long explanations tend not to be effective with toddlers--their understanding about the rights of others or the value of property is quite limited. Your actions and attitudes are much more effective in showing him how to behave. "Catch 'em being good"; use praise and attention to encourage positive behaviors. Tantrums tend to be less frequent and lengthy if they are ignored, and if they don't succeed in getting the toddler what he wants. Unacceptable behavior can be handled by using a "time out" or "naughty" chair; 2 minutes of being isolated or ignored can be very effective while avoiding a lot of yelling. In general, spanking is ineffective, and can teach children that hitting is the right thing to do when they're angry. Reserve a swat on the bottom for incidents that involve safety and you need to make a quick impression.

Keep rules simple. If you can phrase them positively, they can teach children what they should do, rather than what they should not. Instead of "Don't squeeze the cat", try "Remember, pet the kitty gently", or "Please

close the door", instead of "Don't open that". Toddlers and preschoolers will "test the limits" to see just what behaviors will be accepted or tolerated by you, so consistency in expectations and limits is important. Follow through with what you promise and never threaten anything you are not prepared to enforce. Punishment, when necessary, is most effective when it is part of a warm, affectionate, and generally accepting relationship between parent and child, so accentuate the positive.

Safety:

The increasing physical competence and independence of the two-year-old predisposes him to accidents. Cleaning supplies and medications are not safe from their explorations unless they are locked up. Nothing is out of reach for a determined toddler, and "child-proof" caps are deterrents only to adults. If you do not have Activated Charcoal Suspension in the cupboard, pick some up. Prompt usage in the event of poisoning can be a life-saver--call our office or the Poison Control Center at Lifeline for instructions before using. Check that the thermostat on the water heater is turned down to 130; or less to prevent accidental burns caused by exploring the faucets. Don't forget that the car seat is safest when placed in the middle of the rear seat.