



## 18-20 Month Check-Up:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Development:** *Your child may be ready to:*

- Say 15-20 words; combine some words into sentences.
- Name many parts of his/her body; play ball and imitate activities; scribble on paper.
- Run, walk up steps, kick and throw balls; stack a tower of 2-4 cubes.
- Know how to use a spoon and cup; help with putting on clothing.
- Listen to a story and look at pictures, have interactive play with dolls, car toys.

*If you have any concern about your child's development, language skills, or interaction with his/her surroundings, please discuss with your provider.*

**Nutrition:** Continue healthy eating habits that may stay for later years: the best diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish and lean meat in moderate quantities. Limit consumption of processed meats (ham, hot dogs, bacon, etc.), sugary foods (including sugar cereal), chips and other fast food. Limit fruit juice to no more than 4-6 oz/day. Do not offer sugar-drinks, such as soda, Koolaid, Gatorade.

- Avoid foods that may cause choking (nuts, chunks of meat, hotdogs, popcorn, raisins, etc.)
- Mothers who wish to continue breast-feeding are encouraged to do so. Give low fat milk, or full-fat soy milk. Limit milk consumption to 2 cups/day. Give other dairy products as cheese, cultured-yogurt.
- Your child should be weaned from bottles by now. Absolutely do not put your child to bed with a milk or fruit juice bottle, as this can cause tooth decay.
- Many children eat less at this age. Let your child decide how much to eat. Rather than giving frequent snacks, wait for the child to be hungry enough to enjoy a variety of healthy foods at the next regular family mealtime.
- Continue Vitamin D3 supplementation (400 units/day) (and fluoride if indicated).

**Safety:** **Accidents are the #1 cause of deaths** among American children. Other environmental toxins have life long ill effects. Here are some common practices to prevent accidents:

- Prevent burns: make sure your child cannot grab hot pans, curling irons, and coffee or tea cups. Place plastic plugs in all electrical sockets. Install and check smoke detectors regularly. Keep hot water thermostat set at 120 degrees.
- Prevent accidental poisoning: Keep cleaning products and medications in locked cabinets out of your child's reach. Remember that some out- and in-door plants may be poisonous. Keep **Poison Control Center** phone number handy: 1-800-222-1222
- Store any guns unloaded in a safe place out of reach from any child or teen.
- Keep sharp objects (pens, pencils, scissors, sticks, etc.) away from your toddler; never allow your child to walk or run holding them. Keep small objects that can be swallowed out of reach (coins, small toy parts, etc.)

- Avoid falls: put locks or guards on all windows; supervise your child near play equipment and stairs. If your child is climbing out of his/her crib, switch to a toddler bed or mattress on the floor.
- Always supervise your child when he/she is near water (pool, bath tub, toilet, pond, etc.), and in the presence of animals (including family pets).
- **Car safety:** Use car seat for every ride. Place it in the back seat, rear-facing for greatest safety. Never leave your child alone in the car. Drivers can't see small children, so watch your child all the times near the street, driveway, or parking lot.
- Use sunscreen (SPF 15), hat, pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors for sun protection.
- **Don't expose your child to second-hand smoke.**
- Limit the use of plastic for food storage or microwave heating. Plastics # 3, 6 and 7 are particularly toxic.

### **Healthy Habits and Positive Parenting:**

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day with a toothbrush with a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Put your child to bed at a regular time, at least no later than 8 pm. Maintain a "**bedtime routine**". If your child wakes up in the middle of the night, go in for reassurance and comfort, but it may not be a good idea to pick up and/or bring your child to your bed! Allow child to learn to self-sooth.
- Read stories daily, play music, talk and play matching games with your child; encourage him/her to play with other children, and enjoy the outdoors. Feed his/her curiosity by exploring new things and learning new words.
- **Children under age 2 should not watch any TV or videos** (even "children's programs"), as this may negatively affect early brain development. Do not leave the TV on all day as background entertainment for the family.
- **Temper tantrums** are a child's way to express frustration, disappointment or anger, thus are normal part of growing up. Discipline your child when appropriate, especially when it comes to maintaining safety. Say "no" firmly, then physically move your child from the dangerous situation, and redirect to another activity. Be consistent. Do not yell, spank, or shake your child. If you have a hard time dealing with this issue, please call or make appointment for more advice.
- Give praise and hugs for good behavior, but do not use food as rewards! Be understanding and show affection. Children learn by imitating.
- Occasionally, take a break from your toddler, if the child can be entrusted to a family member or babysitter: it takes a lot of patience to raise a child; you and your spouse need (and deserve) some time for yourselves once in a while. Don't feel guilty.

Next regular check up: When you child is around 24 months of age.

<b>Benton Health Center</b> 530 NW 27 <sup>th</sup> Street Corvallis, OR 97330 (541) 766-6835	<b>Lincoln Health Center</b> 121 SE Viewmont Ave. Corvallis, OR 97333 (541) 766-3546	<b>Monroe Health Center</b> 610 Dragon Drive Monroe, OR 97456 (541) 847-5143	<b>East Linn Health Center</b> 100 Mullins Drive #A-1 Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 451-6920
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