

HEALTH TRACKS

A Newsletter From Local Public Health to Improve the Health of Families in NW Minnesota



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

AGE - 2 YEARS



GREETINGS!

By now you've realized how unique your toddler is. He is standing up and walking a lot. Like most toddlers, he/she is probably no longer content to stay in one place. At 2 years of age toddlers are curious about the world and want to explore it. They walk, touch, poke, smell, and taste things. In this way, they learn to master new skills.

The child who is curious one minute may be fearful the next. Toddlers have both a growing sense of independence and a need for security and love. The frustration - and fun - of having a toddler comes from helping him/her through these ups and downs and by providing love along with secure boundaries to explore the world.

YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH CARE



Well-Child Check-Ups:

Your toddler's 2 year check-up is now due. Ask for a second lead test. Don't forget about the dentist, regular dental checkups are a necessity.

Immunizations (shots):

- ★ Influenza yearly
- ★ Ask your health care provider to review your child's immunizations record to be sure that no shots are needed.
- ★ If your child is behind or even if he hasn't received any shots, they can be given (caught up) or started at any time. Don't wait any longer to protect him from these dangerous, preventable diseases. He/she will need to have immunizations before beginning kindergarten.

YOUR GROWING CHILD

- ✿ Can jump, run, or walk up and down the stairs with help.
- ✿ Listens to short stories
- ✿ Can turn pages of a book
- ✿ Copies another child's play
- ✿ Sometimes uses two-word sentences
- ✿ Premature infants may develop more slowly
- ✿ Please call me if you have any concerns



REMEMBER: *Wait until your child is ready for toilet training. Don't rush the issue.*



Common Health Concerns



Injury is the biggest threat to a toddler's life. Most injuries have predictable causes - and most can be prevented.

Please follow the safety tips in these letters to prevent injuries.

TOILET TRAINING:

Sometime after 18 months of age a toddler will begin to show an interest in his parents/siblings routine use of the toilet. Cues that say he/she may be ready to learn:

- ★ Stays dry for several hours at a time.
- ★ Regularly lets you know when a bowel movement is coming
- ★ May squat, tug at his diapers, become very still, or hide in a corner after he has a BM.
- ★ Complains about wet or dirty diapers and wants to be changed.
- ★ Becomes more aware of cleanliness (his clothes, room, or food).
- ★ Understands what you want him to do.
- ★ Once you notice the cues for readiness, begin slowly and be patient.
- ★ There is no “one method” that works for every child.
- ★ If you expect too much of him, or try too hard, toilet training will be a struggle for everyone involved.
- ★ Just like you don't expect him to walk before he is physically ready, you shouldn't expect him to control his bowels and bladder before he is physically able to control the muscles he needs to use.
 - Adults can not have bowel movements “on command”, and neither can children
 - Laxatives, enemas and suppositories should not be used for toilet training.
 - Begin by getting your child comfortable with the potty chair. Let him see it as you explain how it will be used.
 - Next, help him to understand the real purpose of the potty chair or toilet (set him on the chair or toilet after he has a BM in a diaper - unfasten diaper and drop the contents into the chair or toilet).
 - After a few days or so he will understand what the chair/toilet is for.
 - Reward success with praise. When he's unsuccessful, don't criticize him.
 - Bladder control usually follows bowel control. It may take longer to achieve.
 - Your child's sense of independence will increase as bowel and bladder control occurs.
 - If he is unsuccessful in his attempt to learn, stop trying to train him and try again in a few months. Some people don't start training until their child is 2 1/2 years old.

ACTIVITY TIP

Continue to read to him and hug him often. Introduce him to the library and check out DVD's CD's and books.

Safety Check

NEVER leave your toddler, even for a few seconds, in or near any body of water without supervision. This includes:

- ✓ bathtub
 - ✓ swimming pool
 - ✓ fish pond
 - ✓ whirlpool
 - ✓ hot tub
 - ✓ lake
- Supervise when he is near stairs and block entrances to stairs.
 - NEVER leave your toddler alone in the car, even if it's locked and in your driveway.
 - Make sure your child rides in an approved car seat at all times.
 - Don't let your toddler play with electrical cords or outlets. Keep outlets covered.
 - Put safety locks on cupboards and cabinets that have dangerous things in them. Keep them “**OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF REACH!**”
 - Have the phone number of Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) and your health care provider handy.
 - Keep pot handles turned inward on the stove.

When you feel like you might lose patience, take time out.

- Take a walk
- Talk to a friend
- Do something else that helps you calm down
- Find your best outlet and use it as needed

FEEDING YOUR CHILD

Physically, your toddler is growing more slowly than during the first year. His appetite may also be decreasing.

He often develops specific food likes and dislikes, refusing vegetables one month, meat the next month, and milk the next.

- Offer a variety of small amounts of nutritious foods.
- Give your toddler choices.
- Be ready to offer seconds.

Most toddlers enjoy feeding themselves and are skilled with a spoon and cup by now.

- During this learning period expect a messy face and spilled milk.
- Use large bibs and have a sponge or paper towels ready for spills.
- Pour small amounts of liquids (1-2 oz) at a time into your toddler's glass to prevent large spills.

Web resource: www.mypyramid.gov

POSITIVE PARENTING

Because the toddler years are a time of change and learning, don't be surprised if...

- ★ Your toddler's favorite words are "no" and "mine".
- ★ He often does the opposite of what's asked.
- ★ He appears stubborn and uncooperative.
- ★ Don't give in if he resists the idea of riding in a car seat. He will accept it if you are firm.

This is normal behavior for a child of this age. So expect it and prepare for it. It will soon pass.

It will soon be time to have him sleep in a bed. Be sure to block the sides so he can't fall out. You may want to place the crib mattress on the floor next to the bed just in case.



I hope you are still finding our letters helpful. Please call me if you wish to discuss your baby's well-child check-up or any concerns you might have about his growth and development. If you have friends who are pregnant, or have young infants, please tell them to join our program by calling me. Remember to let me know if you change your name, address, or phone number.

I will be writing again before your baby is 3 years old. Relax and enjoy this exciting stage of your child's development. Good-bye for now!



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