

## Your Baby at 15 Months

**Medications:** Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen can be given as needed for discomfort or fever. No other medications are recommended for this age unless directed by your doctor. Please see our dosing chart for the right dose based on your baby's weight today.

**Next Visit:** 18 months of age unless there are other concerns

### *Immunizations*

You should receive a specific handout for each vaccine given, and if you don't, please let us know. Side-effects are uncommon but can include:

- Discomfort at the injection site
- Mild fatigue if any
- Low grade fever for up to 24-36 hours, usually < 101.
- Redness and warmth at the injection site for a few days; this is not an infection
- A small lump where the vaccine was given, which may last several weeks
- You can help your baby feel better after vaccines by giving lots of tender loving care, allowing for extra rest, and giving Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen as needed for significant discomfort or fever. We recommend that you only give it as needed, rather than around the clock. Recent studies indicate that Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen, given too frequently, may blunt the immune system's response to the vaccines, making them less effective.

See immunization schedule here:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-pocket-pr.pdf>

### *What Your Baby Can Do*

Most babies at 15 months can:

*Gross Motor Skills:* walk fairly well, stoop down and get back up without help & climb stairs with help & supervision

*Fine Motor Skills:* drinking with a cup independently, finger feeding small foods, stacking 2 blocks at a time

*Speech:* Mama & Dada mean Mom & Dad; 2-3 other specific "words," even if someone outside your family doesn't understand them

*Social:* points to a few body parts, bringing or showing you something interesting, pointing at objects on a shelf, turns when his or her name is called

One of the red flags about autism is regression: we don't like to see any child lose their skills at any age. Often, however, children will have subtle backslides in their development that are completely normal. Some kids will use a particular word over and over again, and then a few months later, they will have dropped it out of their vocabulary and then look at you like you're crazy when you use that word. Another subtle change is that kids often get a little clumsy or frustrated when they are tackling a new motor skill. As they learn to run more athletically, they will sometimes get prone to falls for a time like they have 2 left feet. Large-scale regressions are never normal – a child should never stop talking completely or lose gross motor skills completely. If that happens, let us know. These more subtle regressions, however, are the consequences of little brains making new connections that will result in an explosion of cognitive, verbal and motor skills this year.

### ***Feeding – Avoiding Battles***

Toddlers are frustratingly inconsistent. We told you about that appetite slump that comes during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of life. One more thing about that: some days they eat well and other days they seem to eat almost nothing. This is an easy place for you to get lulled into coddling a picky eater. Don't do it! For children who have no significant health or growth concerns, here are some tips that we suggest to avoid food battles:

- Give several of choices for snacks as well as 1-2 meals per day (typically breakfast and lunch)
- Dinner is Dinner. What you cook, they are offered. If you eat something very spicy or unusual, consider modifying their meal, but otherwise, dinner is dinner. If they don't eat, they don't eat. A cup of milk at bedtime is negotiable, but not necessary at this age.
- Offer 1-2 bites of the food they are less likely to eat FIRST. When they have tried a bite or two of each, they can have more of whatever they liked.
- Have them join the "Polite Bite" club – they need to try one bite of everything on their plate. Avoid the "Clean Plate Club," which leads to high risk for obesity.
- Avoid allowing them to fill up on milk in between meals. It's not good for their teeth and it keeps their appetite low. Max out milk at 18-24 oz/day (that's about 3 sippy cups). More is not helpful, and more can be harmful. We recommend a minimum volume of about 12 oz per day, however, to make sure we have enough Vitamin D, Calcium and Phosphorus in their diet. Whole milk is still recommended for most toddlers in an effort to provide adequate fat for essential brain development at this time.
- Avoid a snack within about 2 hours of dinner.
- Avoid meals in front of the TV except for an occasional treat.
- Dessert is not mandatory. Snacks are healthy with an occasional treat a few times/week.
- We don't recommend that you NEVER let your child have cake or sweets. Many kids who are rigidly restricted from treats go crazy when they're offered. The best practice is to help your child learn that treats are a fun part of life, but we don't expect them every day.
- Model healthy eating and portion control. This is perhaps one of the best gifts you can give your children that reaps benefits well into the future.

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/Winning-the-Food-Fights.aspx>

## *Car Seats*

It's tough, but stay backwards if you can!

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx>

## *Safety Issues*

Accidents continue to be the leading cause of death in children ages 1-4. That's a pretty sobering thought. We don't want you to be constantly worrying, but we do want you to take this seriously. Take a few minutes right now to think about ways to make your home safer and your child's risk of injury less. What can your child do at this stage that he or she couldn't do before?

- Consider tethering your bookshelves.
- Tether that big screen TV
- Never leave them alone in the back yard or garage at this age.
- If you haven't invested in a gun safe, this is a good time to think about that.
- Consider locking medications in a tackle box or medication safe. It's a good thing to do from now on.

Here are some more tips:

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/default.aspx>