

YOUR GROWING CHILD...

Toddlers grow, change, and learn differently. Here are some tips to help you enjoy and keep your toddler healthy and safe. Please contact us if you have questions or concerns about your child. Metropolitan Pediatrics offers a 24/7 nurse triage line by contacting the scheduling line at each office.

Health:

- Regular well visits are important to ensure normal growth and development.
 - Toddlers need a well child check at 2 ½ years of age.
 - The next well child check is at 3 years of age.
- Appetite will vary depending on growth and activity.
 - Toddlers often eat a lot one time and not much the next.
 - You decide what to serve, when and where. Offer the same food you make for everyone else. Let your toddler decide how much (if any) to eat.
 - Offer 3 meals and 1-2 healthy snacks per day.
 - To prevent choking, your child should never be left unattended while eating. Avoid nuts, popcorn and small hard candy until 5 years of age. These are easy for your child to choke on. Table foods that aren't cut appropriately can be high risk (for example: hot dogs, grapes). Never allow your toddler to walk, run, or ride in the car with food in his mouth.
- The first dental visit is recommended starting at 1 year and every 6 months thereafter.
 - Brush teeth twice per day. Children's toothpaste with fluoride is recommended in small quantities (a grain of rice on the brush).
 - Juice and other sugar-sweetened beverages are not recommended for children.
- May sleep 10-12 hours at night and nap 1 time per day.
 - Keep a regular bedtime routine.
- Children need regular exercise, like playing games outside. Aim for a minimum of 1 hour per day.

Learning:

- Toddlers at this age usually:
 - Use 4-5 word phrases or short sentences. Read with your child often to promote language development.
 - Like to make their own decisions and may have tantrums. Give choices – "Do you want a nap now or after a story?"
 - MAY be ready for toilet training. This can be frustrating! Wait for your child to show interest prior to starting as not every child is ready at the same time.
 - Test boundaries. It is best to set limits, be consistent, and use distractions. Praise your child often!
- Limited screen time is allowed for children older than 2 years of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises less than 2 hours of age-appropriate screen time per day.

Safety:

- Children should always use a forward-facing harnessed seat properly secured in the back seat until they outgrow the weight limit (typically 40-60 pounds, depending on the individual seat).
-

- Require helmet use when your child is riding any wheeled toy.
- Teach your child respect for animals. Never allow the child to play around an animal who is sleeping or eating.
- Your toddler is on the move! Use safety gates, door latches, and outlet covers. Ensure cords and window-drape strings are up and out of reach. Place small objects out of reach.
- Toddlers are curious. Lock up your guns and bullets separately. It is the law and will decrease the risk of accidental injury or death caused by firearms.
- Your toddler may wander away from you when you aren't looking. Watch your toddler carefully.
- Always keep crib rails up and the mattress at the lowest setting. Change to a toddler bed if he/she climbs out of the crib.
- Prevent injury from burns. Keep your child away from the stove and oven. Turn pot handles to the back of the stove.
- Never leave your child alone in a bath tub. Provide close supervision anytime you will be around water (pool, lake) and avoid standing water in your home (buckets). Model appropriate water safety by wearing life jackets on or near the water.
- Don't let anyone smoke or vape around your child.
- Use sunscreen and sun-protective clothing when spending time outdoors.
- Enforce that your child wear a helmet when riding a bike/trike.
- Use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check them twice per year (such as at daylight savings time).
- Minnesota Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
- Car seat clinic locations and schedule: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/child-passenger-safety/Pages/car-seat-checks.aspx>