
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 18 months.
 - The next well child check is at 24 months of age.
- Appetite will vary depending on growth and activity.
 - Toddlers should consume 12-20 ounces of whole milk per day. Use a sippy cup for liquids. No more bottles.
 - Toddlers often eat a lot one time and not much the next. They may love a food one day and hate it 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 2-3 snacks of table foods per day.
 - Use a cup, spoon, or fingers to feed themselves.
 - 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 should be cut into quarters).
- The first dental visit is recommended at 1 year.
 - 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.
 - Do not put your child in their crib with a bottle. Prolonged nighttime feeding increases the risk of dental cavities.
 - Limit pacifier use to the crib only. Ideally wean pacifier use by age 2 years.
- May sleep 10-12 hours at night and nap 1-2 times per day.
 - Keep a regular bedtime routine.
- Immunizations are recommended at 18 months of age to prevent serious illness in your child as well as to prevent the spread of infections.

Learning:

- Toddlers at this age usually:
 - Say 15-20 words and like to imitate what you say and do. Read short books with colorful pictures.
 - Walk well and start to run.
 - Like to throw balls, pull toys along the ground, and scribble.
 - Start to give kisses but may still be afraid of strangers.
 - Like to make their own decisions and may have tantrums. Give choices – “Do you want the red one or the blue one?”
 - Are NOT usually ready for toilet training.

- Get into everything. Exploring is how children learn about their world. Create a safe space for movement and exploration. Move objects that are unsafe or you don't want touched.
- Test boundaries. It is best to set limits, be consistent, and use distractions. Praise your child often!
- It is not recommended to allow children less than 2 years of age to watch television or have 'screen time.' Limited use of interactive video chat (such as FaceTime) is ok.
- Consider enrolling in Parent Powered Texts to receive tips for learning and development at thinksmall.org/texts

Safety:

- Always use an approved car seat properly secured in the back seat. It is recommended to keep children rear-facing up to the height and weight-limits of your individual car seat.
- 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! This is an important time to child proof your home. 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.
- Never allow your toddler to walk, run, or ride in the car with food in his mouth.
- 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).
- Don't let anyone smoke or vape around your child.
- Use sunscreen and sun-protective clothing when spending time outside.
- Consider taking a CPR course.
- 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>