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Well Child TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR 2-YEAR-OLD

CHILDREN ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING. And while you as parents can't anticipate every change, these Well Child Tips can prepare you for what lies ahead and help you raise a healthy and safe child.

SAFETY

- Teach your 2-year-old that hot things can hurt him. Say "HOT!" every time he goes near something that could burn him. Always turn pot handles toward the back of the stove when you cook. Make sure your child is not nearby when you take hot meals out of the oven.
- Keep your car doors locked when you are not in the car. Your toddler can climb into a car, but may not be able to get out. If he is stuck in a closed car for even a few minutes, especially during the summer, he could get heat stroke, suffocate and even die.
- Going forward from year 2000 models, most cars will be equipped with an attachment mounting in the rear seat area for a tether strap, which is an adjustable strap attached to the upper back of a forward-facing child safety seat. When properly used, a top tether strap reduces risk of injury by limiting the movement of a child's head in a forward crash. Check with the manufacturers to see if previous model seats and cars can be fitted with top tether attachments.
- One of the most common ways toddlers get hurt is by falling. Help keep your child safe by watching him closely and putting safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Your child can fall out of an open window, even if there is a screen. Move chairs, beds and other furniture away from windows to keep him from climbing up to them. Keep doors to balconies and decks locked. Open windows from the top.
- Children love to play in water, even the water in a toilet bowl. Keep the bathroom door closed and be sure to empty tubs, buckets and baby pools after using them, as children can drown in less than one minute in just two inches of water. For more information on water safety, please visit our Web site at www.choa.org. Or stop by the nearest Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Immediate Care center.

- If you have any questions about immunizations, be sure to discuss them with your child's healthcare provider. Following a regular immunization schedule is very important for your child's health.
- Washing hands is the most effective way to stop the spread of germs. Teach your child to wash his hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water before he eats or drinks and after he uses the toilet, blows his nose, sneezes or coughs.

NUTRITION

- Keep the division of responsibility in place: Parents are responsible for what food is served, when regular meals and planned snacks are served and keeping meal times pleasant. Children are responsible for what, how much and if they eat from what has been served.
- Two-year-olds need three regular meals and two to three planned snacks. They need to be fed at consistent times so they learn to anticipate eating.
- Two-year-olds should not be given food handouts between meals and snacks.
- Between meals and snacks, water is the beverage children need. Sodas and other sweet beverages are not appropriate for toddlers.



DEVELOPMENT

- At 2 years of age, some toddlers are ready to start toilet training. Others are almost 3 years old before they want to try. Do not force your toddler if he isn't willing. He may be ready to begin if he complains when his diaper is dirty, can stay dry for several hours during the day and can follow simple instructions.
- Many toddlers are able to brush their teeth, with a little help, by the time they are 2 years old. If your child fusses about brushing his teeth, let him practice by helping you brush your teeth first.
- Your toddler is becoming more skillful with his hands. He may be able to put simple puzzles together and put some of his clothes on by himself.
- Many 2-year-olds can put words together to ask simple questions like, "What's this?" Your toddler may know about 50 words by now.
- Toys for 2-year-olds are best if they are action-oriented, especially if your child can cause the toy to move or make a sound. Rhythm instruments are a good choice as are costumes and other make-believe materials. Children this age also enjoy realistic household items such as phones, toy vacuums and lawnmowers and toy vehicles.

PARENTING

- Some 2-year-olds begin to fear things such as strangers, the dark, dogs, thunderstorms and other loud noises. This is normal. Let your child know that you understand his fears.
- Your toddler may say "No!" frequently. It is his way of showing independence. He should grow out of it. Make a game out of tasks and avoid asking him questions where he can answer "no," such as, "Do you want a sandwich?" Instead, ask, "Do you want a cheese sandwich or a peanut butter sandwich?"
- Some toddlers bite, hit and pull hair when they are around other children because they do not know how to use words to express themselves. Calmly move him away and tell your child that hitting and biting hurt his friends. You should also help him learn words to communicate needs by role modeling and encouraging.
- You can help your toddler feel good about himself. Plan times during the day when you give him your total attention. Read books together. Play games. Sing songs. It will make you feel good, too.

NEXT VISIT

Until your next appointment, you may call your child's healthcare provider if you have any questions about keeping your child safe and healthy. If your child's healthcare provider is unavailable, call the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice line at 404.250.kids or check the Children's Web site at www.choa.org for more information.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: These tips are just a guide and do not give you all the information you need to raise a healthy and safe child. Remember that children develop and grow at different rates and you know your child best. If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to ask your child's healthcare provider.