Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Dr. Christopher Burress
Board certified Internal Medicine and Pediatrics

Caring for your 18-month-old toddler

Name_____ Weight_____ Height_____ Date_____

Keep Your Toddler Safe

Use a Car Seat Install it properly in the back seat facing backward.

Prevent Suffocation

- Don't let your toddler play with balloons, plastic bags or coins.
- Don't give your toddler marbles or toys with small, removable parts (like buttons).

Prevent Drowning

- Don't leave your toddler alone around water.
- Learn child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Empty buckets, tubs and small pools as soon as you are done using them.

Prevent Burns

- Protect your toddler from sunburn. Use sunscreen.
- Keep your baby away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters. Turn panhandles toward the back of the stove.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120ºF.

Prevent Poisoning

- Lock all poisons (medicines, pest killers, paints, cleaning agents) out of reach and sight of your toddler.
- Tell your medical care provider if you have peeling paint in your home.

Prevent Other Injuries

- Teach your toddler caution around animals.
- Make sure an adult is always watching your child.
- Make your home child-safe (see our "Child-Proofing Checklist").
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- **Never** shake, toss or hit your toddler. Make sure other caregivers (like day care providers, aunts and uncles) don't either.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Feed your toddler at family mealtimes. Give your baby 2 to 3 nutritious snacks per day, but don't use them as rewards. Nutritious snacks are low in fat and sugar and high in fiber (like most fruits).
- As much as possible, let your baby practice self-feeding.
- Offer your baby nutritious foods and let your baby decide how much to eat.
- Avoid foods that your child might choke on (nuts, hot dogs, popcorn, whole beans, chunks of raw carrot, celery or apple, whole grapes, hard candies, raisins, corn, or tough meat).
- Do not allow a bottle at bedtime.

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Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Encourage Healthy Development

- Encourage your toddler socially. Talk with your baby. Encourage your baby to explore and play with other children. Don't let your baby watch television.
- Encourage learning words. Read stories and rhymes with your baby. Use words to describe what you think your baby is feeling.
- Help your baby be stronger and more coordinated. Let your baby color and scribble.
- Help your baby develop self-love by showing your baby respect. **Never** yell at your baby. When your baby is upset, take time to try to understand why. Set limits by taking your baby away from the situation that is causing a problem. Try to see and prevent problems before they occur.

Encourage Healthy Behaviors

- Praise your toddler for healthy behavior.
- Help your baby learn to calm down or settle. A favorite toy, stuffed animal or blanket can help.
- Toddlers need structure. Create a schedule for your baby's day and try to keep to it. Create daily routines. Help the family create a few rules that apply to everyone in the family. Enforce family rules consistently.
- Use discipline as a way of teaching and protecting your toddler, not punishing your baby. Some toddlers are aggressive, but they are not "mean." Teach your child that hitting, biting and kicking others is not okay. Teach your baby that breaking things is not okay.
- **Avoid screen time** with your baby by limiting exposure to Cell Phones, Tablets, or Laptops.

Encourage Self Care

- Your child needs a regular bedtime, and may need a nap each day.
- Help your baby sleep through the night in your baby's own bed.
- Help your baby brush your baby's teeth at least daily. Use a tiny amount of toothpaste with fluoride. Make your baby an appointment to see a dentist.

Prevent Sickness—Identify and Treat It Early

- Do not induce vomiting or use ipecac. For suspected poisoning, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222.
- Keep your toddler away from cigarette smoke. Don't smoke when your baby is in the car. Don't smoke in the home.
- Call the clinic right away if your toddler is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for children to reduce fever. A fever is an under-the-arm temperature of 101°F or higher. A dehydrated toddler has fewer than five wet diapers a day, is much less active than usual, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Development

All babies develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your baby:

- Walks steadier and faster
- Tries to kick and throw a ball
- Stacks three or four blocks
- Uses a spoon well
- Speaks five to 10 words and starts to use "I" "me" and "you"
- Knows body parts
- Keeps good eye contact
- Points out interesting objects such as flowers, bugs and planes
- Copies your actions

Your toddler's next visit is when your baby is about 2-years-old. At this visit we may check your baby for infection with the tuberculosis bacteria. We will need your help to find out if your baby is developing normally. Remember to bring your baby's immunization record with you.