



What You Need to Know: 2 Years Old

Nutrition

- Offer a variety of table foods diced into small pieces. Let your child feed himself with a utensil or fingers.
- He should be exclusively using a cup (no bottles).
- Do not feed your toddler peanuts, nuts, or popcorn.
- Avoid giving large pieces of food, raw carrots or celery, seeds, whole grapes, or hot dogs that may choke your toddler.
- Your job as a parent is to choose healthy foods for your child and offer those 3-5 times per day. It is your child's job to decide how much to eat and whether to eat at all. Intuitive eating should be encouraged.
- Be a good role model of healthy eating.
- Growth in toddlers is inconsistent and so are their eating habits. Expect appetite to go up and down.
- Offer healthy choices. Limit foods and drinks which are high in simple sugars, trans fats, refined flour, fatty foods, sweets, and juice intake.
- Your toddler should drink 16-24 oz. of cow's milk each day. Drinks derived from nuts, such as almonds, are not milk.
- Vitamin D supplementation is recommended, 600 IU per day. A multivitamin may be the easiest way to provide it.

Sleep

A regular bedtime routine is very important for toddlers. The average 2-year-old sleeps 11-14 hours per day. Most toddlers this age take one nap per day. If your toddler is resistant to the nap, it is still important to have a period of rest at a scheduled time each day.

Development/Milestones

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Shows defiant behavior
- Shows more and more independence
- Says 2-4 word phrases
- Points to things in a book
- Follows 2-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes" or "Put that in the trash can"
- Names pictures in a book such as cat, bird, dog
- Kicks a ball
- Climbs off furniture without help

Safety

- *Injuries are the leading cause of death in children younger than 4 years of age in the United States*
- Car seats should be **rear-facing** until at least 2 years old, and as long as the child tolerates it. Children should always ride in the back seat.
- If you have a gun in the home, make sure it is in a locked safe, unloaded, and separate from ammunition.
- Lock cabinets and keep cleaners, medications, plastic bags, and small objects away from your toddler.
- Keep the Poison Control number by your telephone; (800) 222-1222.
- Use a properly fitted bicycle helmet if you take your toddler on a bike ride.
- Watch your child carefully when around stairs.
- Do not leave your toddler alone around open water like tubs, pools, lakes or streams.
- Keep children away from stoves, ovens, fires, hot liquids, and styling tools.
- Teach your child the dangers of cars in the street, and always closely supervise your child when near a street.
- Be watchful when backing out of your driveway. Make sure children are a safe distance away before backing up.
- Have a working smoke/carbon monoxide detector on every floor in your house.
- Never leave your child in the car alone, even for a minute.

Discipline/Parenting

- Be consistent. Parents should strive to be on the same page.
- Praise good behavior. Tell them “good job” when they listen or do what is asked.
- Avoid too many rules.
- Say “No”, and then physically remove your child from a dangerous situation.
- Do not yell or spank.
- Keep timeouts brief (under 2 minutes)
- All children have tantrums at some time. It is their way of expressing anger and frustration.
- Keep in mind that tantrums increase when your toddler is tired, sick, or hungry.
- Ignore attention-seeking tantrums.
- Spend one-on-one time with your toddler doing something she enjoys.

Toilet Training

Signs that your toddler is ready to start toilet training:

- Stays dry for two hours
- Knows if she is wet or dry
- Can pull pants up and down
- Can tell when she is going to have a bowel movement
- Shows interest in learning
- Few children successfully toilet train at two years of age. Most will be more willing and capable at two-and-a-half to three.

- Consider the book, “It’s You and Me Against the Pee” by Julia Cook and Laura Jana, MD, when starting this process.

Other Things....

- Use a soft toothbrush and a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, about the size of a grain of rice, to clean your toddler’s teeth twice daily every day.
- Limit the amount of screen time to less than 2 hours a day and monitor the types of shows your child watches. Young children should not be allowed to use smartphones.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends children 2 and older get no more than an hour of screen time per day.
- Read with your toddler daily, for at least 15-30 minutes
- Protect from sun exposure with clothing, hat, shade, or an umbrella. Use broad-spectrum, PABA-free sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Reapply frequently.
- If you need help with medication dosing, please check out our website or click [here](#).

Next Well Visit (3 years)

Suggested Reading

[“Your Child’s Sleep \(Healthychildren.org\)”](#)

[“Your child, Birth to 5 years \(AAP\)”](#)

Potty Training [“How to Tell When Your Child is Ready”](#)

[Toilet Training Topics from Healthychildren.org](#)

[“It’s You and Me Against the Pee” by Julia Cook](#)

Useful Websites

[www.canyonviewpediatrics.com](#)

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](#)

[www.aap.org](#)

[www.seatcheck.org](#)

[www.healthychildren.org](#)