

# 18 Month Checkup

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_



*“I encourage my child to select a book or two that she would like to read before bed. She’s usually more interested in making funny sounds through the stories, but that’s what makes it fun for both of us.”*

—Kaiser Permanente Member

## Your child may be ready to ...

- walk quickly or run
- throw balls
- say 15 - 20 words
- listen to a story and look at pictures
- know how to use a spoon and cup

## Feeding

- Wean your child from the bottle by 18 months of age.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods each day (such as fruits, well-cooked vegetables, low sugar cereal, yogurt, cheese, whole grain breads, crackers, lean meat, fish, tofu).
- Let your child decide how much to eat.
- Avoid foods that may cause choking (whole hot dogs, nuts, chunks of meat, cheese, peanut butter, whole grapes, hard or sticky candy, popcorn, or raw vegetables).
- Give your child whole cow’s milk or full-fat soy milk to drink (2 cups/day). Don’t give low-fat or nonfat milk until 2 years of age.
- Limit juice to no more than 4 – 6 oz. each day. Make sure the label says “100% fruit juice.” Do not give your child soda or other sweet drinks.
- Cut down on unhealthy foods, such as chips, fast food, and sweets.

## Healthy habits

- Protect your baby from whooping cough by making sure shots are up to date. Whooping cough (also called pertussis) is a contagious disease that can be spread easily from person to person through coughing. It is very serious for babies. Whooping cough can cause them to stop breathing or to cough so much that they can’t breathe.
- Brush your child’s teeth every day with water only. Don’t use toothpaste until your child is 2 years old.
- Take time out for family physical activities (walking, outdoor games).
- Children under age 2 should not watch TV or videos. Too much TV may negatively affect early brain development.
- To protect your child from the sun, try to stay in the shade, especially between 10 am and 4 pm. Use a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB protection) sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Cover him or her up with a broad brimmed hat, long sleeves and pants, and sunglasses with UV protection.

- Don’t smoke! Talk with your doctor or visit the Health Education Department if you would like to quit smoking.

## Safety

- **Drivers can’t see small children.** Check carefully before backing your car out of the driveway. Watch your child at all times near the street or in a parking lot.
- **Prevent drowning.** Watch your child at all times when he or she is near water (such as a pool, hot tub, bucket, bathtub, toilet, lake).
- **Car seat.** Use the car seat for every ride. Your child should always ride in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat. Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat until 2 years of age or until he or she reaches the highest height or weight allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. If you have questions or need help installing your car seat call 1-866-SEATCHECK or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org). For more information, review the car seat information on your child’s doctor’s home page.
- **Avoid falls.** Put locks or guards on all windows above the first floor. Watch your child at all times near play equipment and stairs. If your child is climbing out of his or her crib, switch to a toddler bed.
- **Poison Control Center.** Keep the number to the Poison Control Center near the phone (1-800-876-4766).
- **Gun safety.** Unload all guns and keep them locked up. Keep ammunition in a separate location.
- **Home escape plan.** Have a fire escape/earthquake plan and practice it with your family.
- **Lead poisoning risk.** Tell your doctor if your child spends a lot of time in a house built before 1978.
- **Pet safety.** Never leave your child unattended with any animal, even family pets. Always closely supervise play with pets. At this age kids are naturally curious and get excited easily.

## Parenting

- Play games, talk, sing, and read stories to your child every day. Show affection.
- Discipline calmly. Say “no,” then physically move your child from the situation. Don’t yell or spank. Use “Time Out” instead. (Please see section below.)
- To distract your child from misbehaving, try offering a toy or simply give the child a hug.
- Never leave your child alone in a house or car.

## Potty training

### Remember . . .

- Many children are ready for potty training by the time they are 2 years old.
- Most children are potty trained by the time they reach 3½ years old.
- Potty training usually takes two weeks to two months, but may take longer.
- Staying dry at night usually does not occur until 3 - 6 years of age.
- Patience is the key to success.

### Potty training readiness

- Understands what “pee,” “poop,” “dry,” “wet,” “clean,” “messy,” and “potty” mean
- Shows interest when other family members use the toilet
- Is aware of bowel movements (BMs) and urine in the diaper
- Prefers dry, clean diapers
- Understands that using the potty means having a dry diaper
- Can recognize the sensation of a full bladder and the urge to have a BM (holds pants, squats)
- Can follow simple directions

### Potty training skills

- Get a potty chair (your child can help pick it out), rewards (stickers, toys), and a storybook for your child about potty training.
- Have your child sit on the potty with clothes on for the first few days. Read stories to your child while on the potty. Sitting on the potty should be limited to five minutes.

- Watch for signs of a full bladder, then have practice runs to the potty.
- Show your child where the BMs are supposed to go by placing one of your child’s BMs in the potty chair.
- Never force or pressure your child to sit on the potty. Do not scold or punish your child for accidents.
- Praise or reward your child for any cooperation or success.
- Use training pants (heavy cloth underwear or diaper “pull-ups”) after your child is using the potty most of the time.

## Time Out—the preferred method of discipline

“Time Out” is when you immediately put a child in a boring place for a few minutes every time he or she misbehaves. Do not yell; use a boring, neutral tone of voice.

### When do you use it?

Use Time Out whenever your child acts aggressively (hitting, pinching, or behaves in a way that is dangerous to either him or herself or others).

### When you are at home

Choose a boring location (no toys or TV) for Time Out. The location should be safe (child-proof) and not dark or scary. Do not use bathrooms, closets or basements. A spot on the floor, playpen, or a chair can often be used.

### When away from home

Use the car or have your child sit on the floor or on a bench. Do not leave your child alone.

### Length of Time Out

Have your child stay in Time Out for one minute for every year of age (10 minute maximum). Use a timer.

### Won’t stay in Time Out?

If your child won’t stay in Time Out, take him or her back quickly and reset the timer. Some children will need to be held there (hold shoulders from behind). Tell your child that

you will stop holding when he or she stops trying to escape. Then avoid eye contact and don’t do any more talking. Pretend it doesn’t bother you. If this does not work, use a bedroom with a gate blocking the door. If you don’t have a gate, hold the door closed. If you are having problems with potty training or discipline, talk to your child’s doctor or nurse practitioner to find out more about your child’s temperament (personality).

## Other resources

### Web sites

Kaiser Permanente  
[kp.org](http://kp.org)

American Academy of Pediatrics  
[healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
[nhtsa.org](http://nhtsa.org)

Bright Futures  
[brightfutures.org](http://brightfutures.org)

Preventive Ounce  
[preventiveoz.org](http://preventiveoz.org)

### Books

*Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense* – Satter

*Temperament Tools* – Neville

*When ‘No’ Gets You Nowhere: Teaching Your Toddler and Child Self-Control* – Brenner

*1 2 3 ... The Toddler Years ...* – Van De Zande, et al.

*Your Child’s Health* – Schmitt

**Contact** your local Health Education Department or Center.

## Please share

*this handout with anyone who takes care of your child.*



The next checkup is when your child is 2 - 3 years old.



Your child may get immunizations (shots) at the next visit.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your child’s physician or other health care professional. If your child has persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your child’s doctor.