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## YOUR BABY AT 15 MONTHS

### I. FEEDING/SLEEPING

- A. Toddlers at this age may become disinterested in eating and as a result your child may tend to be a picky eater. Often they may refuse to eat as a means of showing power. Do not be overly concerned about your child's apparent disinterest in food; they are growing less rapidly and need less. Do not force your child to eat but rather attempt to set rules for mealtime. At this age she should have at least one good meal a day.
- B. Your child should be eating all table foods with the family at normal meal times. They can sit for longer periods and enjoy feeding themselves finger foods. He will begin using a spoon and is adept at using a cup (unbreakable dishes may be used to avoid "undue" accidents). Try to limit sugar and give 2-3 nutritional snacks daily. If your child is eating an adequate, balanced diet, supplementary vitamins are not always necessary. However, most children at this age are "picky" and, therefore, you may continue to give vitamin supplements such as Poly-Vi-Sol.
- C. **Sleep:** 10-15 hours/day is common. Children at this age will fall asleep more quickly and there should be less trouble with them waking during the night. The long afternoon nap will often remain, but the morning nap may be shorter or discontinued.
- D. If your child climbs out of the crib, use safety measures (such as netting over the crib or a gate on the door so they won't roam around the house), and consider using a toddler bed which will eliminate the safety concern of falling out of the crib.

### II. GROWTH/DEVELOPMENT

- A. 15 month olds are very active and they are walking better and faster. They can pick things up from standing position. They can climb up and down steps and love to throw things. They can stack blocks and like to put things into containers. They like to imitate and they love to wash their hands and scribble.
- B. Her language will be increasing. 15 month olds often begin to "test" their parents at this age – perhaps by refusing food. Often they will say "no". This provides a good opportunity for limit setting. They are beginning to learning their body parts.
- C. **Stimulation:** Read simple stories, give simple directions. Provide foods with variety of textures, flavors and color. Say the word for the object your child requests.
- D. Toddlers may exhibit aggressive behavior at this age by either hitting or biting. This behavior can be discouraged by using immediate short time-outs.
- E. Temper tantrums are common and a normal way for your child to "let off steam" when mad or frustrated. Since they are your child's way of getting attention, ignoring them will make the behavior lessen. Holding their breath or banging their head is not dangerous. You can lessen the number of events by making sure your child doesn't get overly tired or frustrated. Set reasonable limits and don't expect your child to be perfect. Try to avoid long trips/visits where your child has to keep still or can't play. Serve healthy snacks if meals will be late. Time busy or stressful activities when your child is not tired. Automatically saying "no" to most of your child's requests may actually increase the tantrums, so try to stop and think if the request is worth taking a stand on. Distraction and re-directing are often more successful than confrontation. For major meltdowns, remove your child to a quiet place but do not give them attention until they calm down. Do not yell or try to reward them to stop a tantrum.

### III. SAFETY

- A. Your child could now be front facing in the car seat if he weighs at least 20 pounds and is required by law to stay in a car seat until the weight of 60 pounds. If you have not already turned the seat around, keeping it rear facing is safer than forward facing. Call 1-866-seatcheck to have your car seats evaluated for safety.
- B. Brush your child's teeth daily as part of your nightly routine. Use a regular child's toothbrush. Toothpaste is not necessary at this age, but if so desired, you may use a pea sized amount of toothpaste once daily.
- C. Maintain a smoke free and childproof environment. Routinely check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- D. Always use sunscreen. An SPF of 30 is generally sufficient.
- E. Keep all small objects away from your child to avoid choking. Continue to cut foods into small bites.
- F. Medicines and poisons should remain locked up. The **Poison Control number is 1-800-222-1222**.
- G. If you have any weapons, keep them unloaded and in a locked cabinet.

### IV. WHAT HAPPENS AT THIS VISIT

- A. Your baby will have a physical and developmental assessment. Any necessary vaccines will be given.
- B. Your child's next visit is in 3 months at age 18 months.