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## YOUR BABY AT 18 MONTHS

### I. FEEDING/SLEEPING

- A. Your child should be off the bottle by now. Avoid fast food, junk food, or food that is overly salty, fried or sweetened. Children expect to feed themselves, so finger foods are best. Keep menus and seasonings simple; add new foods in small amounts. Do not give snacks between meals if he is refusing food at mealtimes. Watch her milk intake amount (limit of 20 oz/day) and offer it primarily at meals. Offer water between meals and avoid juices to protect your child's teeth and to avoid empty calories. Keep mealtime a short, matter-of-fact event and do not give attention to rejected food. "Appetite slumping" is not uncommon. Don't give into that behavior by allowing your child to eat anytime they choose or non-nutritious snacks.
- B. **SLEEP:** 10-15 hours/day is common at this age with definite schedules and routines established. Be careful not to let bedtime rituals become too long and drawn out. Try to keep nap and bedtimes consistent.

### II. TOILET TRAINING

- A. Total bladder control is often not fully accomplished until about 3 years of age, so do not be in a rush. It is not a race and you will be most successful if you wait until your child is willing and able to learn how to toilet. Girls usually are more successful at earlier toileting than boys.
- B. It may help to familiarize your child with toileting by putting a potty-chair on the floor in the bathroom.
- C. You might attempt potty training only if:
  - (1) Regular patterns of bowel movement have been established.
  - (2) Your child understands parental requests, i.e. (heads for potty at time of bowel movement).
  - (3) Your child is willing to sit still on potty-chair.

### III. GROWTH/DEVELOPMENT

- A. By 18 months your child is now running and falling less and less. They will climb stairs, scribble with crayons, throw a ball into a box and push furniture about. They speak at least 8-12 real words and some phrases, but understand much more. Your child will play alone yet is interested in others' activities. They may be quite attracted to a toy or object at this time. Your child will show affection with kisses.
- B. Your child at this age will eat with a spoon and tries with the fork. He likes to close doors, flush the toilet and hand the dish to you when finished, and drink from a cup.
- C. Stimulation: Allow her to fill in words of stories and rhymes. She likes to play naming games, identify names of colors, shapes, and dresses with assistance. They will often build with wooden blocks and complete simple puzzles.
- D. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under 2. However, in no instance should children under 2 years of age watch TV or videos for more than one hour per day.
- E. Set a small number of rules and be consistent. Keep discipline brief (15-30 second time-outs). Temper tantrums are common. It is best to ignore these behaviors and reassure with positive reinforcement once these behaviors stop.

### IV. SAFETY

- A. Keep your home safe. If you have any weapons, they should be kept unloaded and in a locked cabinet. Check your smoke detectors on a regular basis.
- B. Keep all poisons and medications out of reach of children. **The Poison Control Center number is 1-800-222-1222.**
- C. Your child may try to climb out of the crib. It is time to move to a toddler bed if your child is climbing out of the crib or asks to go into a bed.
- D. Always use sunscreen; SPF of 30 is usually sufficient.
- E. Brush your child's teeth twice daily; toothpaste is not necessary, but if desired, limit it to a pea sized amount.
- F. Keep all small items away from your child to avoid choking. Continue to cut firm foods into small bites.

### V. 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 6 months at age 2 years.