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18-Month Well Visit

Developmental skills for your 18-month old include running well, throwing a ball while standing, removing an article of clothing, building a tower with 4 blocks, matching pairs of objects, engaging in pretend play, pointing to three body parts or themselves when asked, using 10-25 words and mimicking sounds that are heard commonly. Changes in behavior such as temper tantrums and acting out are a large part of the behaviors, and many children will respond to distraction. Some at this age do not change their focus so easily and may need to be removed from the situation- a sort of time out with alone time to play in their room. I think this variant of 'timeout' is a good way to distract from tantrums or naughty behavior rather than continuing to say no which doesn't work and may worsen the tantrum. The room should be a calming place not a discipline- it is simply a "cooling off" time in the bedroom after tantrums. 1,2,3 Magic by Thomas Phelan, PhD is a good book for tantrums and behaviorally trying children (and they all are at this age).

Your child, if like most at this age, is probably still fussy and restrictive with food. Continue to offer all types of food. Continue to give milk, 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily. Try to incorporate fresh foods rather than processed or frozen. By offering varying foods you will encourage a variety of foods. Please sit down with them for mealtimes; this will also encourage eating well. Please do not use T.V. as a parenting aid. The child is not capable of learning from the T.V. and they might be calmed by the colors and sounds but it isn't worth the consequence of the T.V. addiction that may come over time.

I have found that a multivitamin may aid in appetite. Juice is not necessary and limit milk to 20 oz daily. I do have education on the website sunnyside peds.com for amounts and types of foods required daily for adequate nutrition if you have any questions please ask for one of these.

Sleep at this age hopefully will be established. If your child is still fighting bedtime it isn't too late to teach this skill. Bedtime routines such as snack, bath, book or other quiet activity and music are calming. Calmly and firmly let your child know your expectations and with consistency the child will sleep. Bedtime routine in the bedroom when possible will help.

At this age, there are many dangers that your child can get into, as you fully know. Poison Control Number on hand, childproof gates and constant watching are necessary. Rear-facing car seats are recommended. I recommend a helmet if riding in a bike trailer or other fast-moving vehicle. Brush teeth 2 times daily and make sure fluoride is in your drinking water. Reverse-osmosis filtration systems for water will remove the fluoride. Let me know if you need a fluoride supplement.

Constipation is common due to toddler food choices- look for fiber rich foods- whole grains, oatmeal, dried or fresh fruits and vegetables. Make sure your child is drinking at least 8 oz of water daily. If the stools are soft even though not daily, don't worry about constipation. If the stools are hard, Miralax, over the counter can be a great help to achieve a soft-daily stool. Let me know if you have concerns regarding this. Do not underestimate the importance of soft, daily stools.

A blood test for anemia is done today. If I didn't discuss this result with you ask me about it.

The next well visit is at 24 months of age.

Have fun and call for questions or concerns,

Suzy Holbrook, MD