



15 Months



Well-Child Visits

Remember to schedule checkups for your child this year!

There are fewer well-child visits after your child turns 1. Call your child's doctor or clinic to their schedule checkups.



Since these visits happen less often it's important to review your child's vaccine schedule to make sure they are up to date. It is also important to ask about their growth and development.

You can check on your child's development using Help Me Grow Washington's resources at helpmegrowwa.org/child-development.

Vaccines



Vaccines are the best protection.

Vaccines are the best protection against many serious diseases. It is important for your child to get vaccinated on time. Serious complications and long-term effects of disease can be more dangerous for young children. Parents or other family members can pass on these diseases, even if they only have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Some diseases can spread even before symptoms appear.

Make sure your child is up to date on their vaccines to help protect them from diseases they may be exposed to at home, child care, or in public.

For a current recommended vaccine schedule visit doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/immunization/children.

To see and download your family's vaccine records online visit myirmobile.com.

Oral Health



Take care of your child's teeth.

Cavities can cause pain and make it hard for your child to eat, sleep, talk, and learn.

Here are some tips to take care of your child's teeth:

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day and always after their last meal or snack. Use a toothbrush with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Give your child water when they are thirsty. Drinking tap water with fluoride is best. Limit juice to 4 to 6 ounces a day as it has cavity-causing sugar. If you are giving your child juice, offer it while eating a meal or snack.
- Offer tooth-healthy foods, like fresh fruit and vegetables, to your child for snacks. Starchy and sticky foods, like crackers, cookies, and fruit gummies, can cause cavities if left on the teeth for too long.
- Schedule a checkup with a dentist. Ask about fluoride varnish. It strengthens teeth and helps prevent cavities.
- Talk to your child's dentist or doctor about fluoride needs. Fluoride supports a healthy mouth and developing teeth and helps prevent cavities.

Growth and Development

You can help your child's development.

Children learn by trying new things and doing them over and over again. Play together to help your child develop new skills. They will start to do new things, like:

- **Saying simple words.**
- **Scribbling.**
- **Walking without help.**

Talk to your child about what you are doing and what you see as you walk or drive. This will help them learn new words. It's important to use real words, not "baby talk." Your child can understand more than they can say. It is normal for children to say "no". When your child says "no" it's important not to get angry.

Stay calm and be firm about what you want your child to do. Give them limited choices when possible. For example, ask your child, "Do you want to wear your blue or yellow shirt?"

Teach hand washing!

It is important that your child learns to wash their hands properly. Germs that cause many illnesses can pass from hands to mouth even if hands don't look dirty.

Use plain soap to scrub and warm water to rinse. Make handwashing fun! Sing a song together for at least 20 seconds. Remember to clean the backs of hands and in between fingers. Rinse hands well and dry them with a clean towel or an air dryer. Use alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes only when there is no soap and water available.



Let's sing a song together while we wash our hands.

Help your child learn about emotions.

Your child is starting to express their feelings. Help them learn how to handle these emotions. Here are some tips:

- Let your child know you see how they feel. Tell them when you notice they are happy, sad, angry, disappointed, excited, and more.
- Play with your child. You may be able to find out why they feel anxious, scared, happy, or proud.
- Read books and look at pictures about feelings together. Ask your child questions about what they see.
- Be aware of your own emotions. The more you understand your own feelings, the better you will you can teach your child. Children learn how to manage feelings by watching how adults around them handle their own.



Help me learn about my emotions.

Help your child get to sleep.

Most children need a nap during the day and should sleep about 11 to 12 hours at night. A bedtime routine can help your child learn to fall asleep on their own. Put your child to bed at the same time every night.

First, help them brush their teeth and wash their face and hands. Then, look at a picture book together in a quiet room. After that, put your child in bed, give them a hug and a kiss, and leave the room.

Sometimes, changes in your child's life, like being sick, going on a trip, moving, or getting a new sibling, can affect their sleep habits.

To help, follow a bedtime routine every night. Let your child choose a special blanket to take to bed. At 15 months, the greatest risk of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) has passed. If you have questions or concerns about sleep, talk with your child's doctor or nurse.

"No one's to-do list is as long as a toddler's at bedtime."



Safety

Prevent drownings!

Drowning can happen fast and quietly. Children can slip into water when you are not looking. Watch your child at all times when they are near water, including bathtubs, toilets, garden fountains, pools, hot tubs, lakes, or the beach. Stay within arm’s reach. Children 0 to 5 years old should wear a life jacket while in or near water.

Empty small pools and buckets after use and keep the toilet lid closed. Swimming pools or hot tubs should have a fence around them with a self-locking gate. An adult should be designated as a “Water Watcher” at all times when your child is near water. Water Watchers should stay focused, do not use smartphones or other devices and limit other distractions. For more information, visit bit.ly/SC-Water-Safety.

Button batteries and magnets can be dangerous.

“Button” batteries are used in remote controls, greeting cards, watches, toys, and other devices. Keep products with button batteries out of the reach of young children.

Your child can find and swallow them without anyone seeing. Swallowing a button battery can quickly damage the throat and digestive system. A child who has swallowed a battery may cough, choke, wheeze, drool, vomit, or not want to eat or drink.

If you think that a child has swallowed a battery, call Washington Poison Center (1-800-222-1222) or take them to an emergency room right away.

Magnets are also a serious health threat if swallowed. Keep all magnets or other products that contain magnets out of your child’s reach. If you think your child has swallowed a magnet, contact their doctor or nurse right away.

Child-proof your house!

Your child can now open and reach things that they could not before, so it is a good time to child-proof your house again. Here are some tips:

- **Secure furniture and TVs.** Bolt or strap furniture, such as dressers, flat panel TVs, or TV cabinets, to the wall from the top.
- **Keep furniture away from windows** to prevent your child from climbing up and falling out.
- **Install window stops.** Stops will prevent windows from opening more than 4 inches from the bottom or side. A window screen won’t protect your child from falling out.
- **Cover all electrical outlets,** even those behind chairs and tables, using child safety outlet covers.
- **Keep cords out of reach.** Make sure cords to window coverings, blinds, small appliances, lamps, and other items that may fall are not looped and are out of reach.

- **Lock up dangerous items.** Keep all chemicals including cleaning supplies and pest products, medications, supplements, alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products, cannabis and cannabis products, and small items locked away, out of sight, and in a place your child cannot reach them.
- **Store ladders out of reach** and never leave them unattended when in use.
- **Lock up firearms.** Store firearms in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault, or lock box so they’re not accessible by children and cannot be handled by anyone without your permission. Store ammunition separately. For more information go to bit.ly/SC-gun-home-safety.



My skin burns easily. Protect me from the sun.

Protect your child’s skin from sunburn.

Your child’s skin can easily burn no matter their skin color. Sunburns in childhood increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. The sun’s rays are most harmful from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Try to keep your child out of the sun and encourage your child to play in the shade.

Dress your child in lightweight clothes that their shoulders, arms, and legs as well as a hat and sunglasses. Use sunscreen (at least SPF 15) to help protect your child’s skin. Rub plenty onto all bare skin about 15 to 30 minutes before going outside. Put more on every 2 to 3 hours and whenever your child has been in the water.

Check alarm batteries.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms can save lives if they work properly. Install and test alarms according to the manufacturer’s instructions. If you don’t have a 10-year sealed lithium battery alarm, replace your alarm batteries if they don’t respond or if they “chirp.” Replace all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every 10 years or when the “test” button fails.

Child Care and School Readiness

Stay involved in child care.

Your child care provider is your helper in taking care of your child. They can help your child feel safe and cared for when away from you or another family member. Staying involved will help you know how your child is being cared for. Here are some tips to stay involved:

- Check regularly about how your child is doing at child care.
- Volunteer for cleanup days or help with activities.
- Join in special events, like field trips, career day, or cultural days important to your family.
- Visit and watch your child while they are at child care.
- Talk to your child’s caregiver if you have questions or concerns about their development.

For more information on choosing quality child care, visit the Department of Children, Youth, and Families at dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care.

Thanks for reading!

Share this letter with other caregivers in your child’s life. You’ll hear from us again before your child is 18 months with information on:

- How to handle difficult behavior.
- Playground and driveway safety.
- Feeding your toddler.



For the Health of All Our Children

Watch Me Grow Washington is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

  @WatchMeGrowWA  www.watchmegrowwa.org



To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers needing assistance, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.
DOH 920-930E April 2025