

GUIDE FOR PARENTS --- 2 YEARS

SLEEP PRACTICES

Night Awakening – You can never depend on your child sleeping through the night, especially during these early years. A change in routine is a common cause of nighttime awakening including changing rooms or beds, losing a favorite sleep toy or blanket, or a trip away from home. Being sick or cutting a tooth may also contribute. These are all valid reasons to wake up but he still needs to be able to put himself to sleep afterwards. Earlier strategies for helping your child do this still apply.

Night fears – Between 12 and 14 months, children begin to actively dream. This can startle or frighten them awake. Comfort them and again allow them to put themselves back to sleep. Also, a night light in his or her room may help if your child expresses fear of the dark.

Changing nap patterns – At this age your child may still require two naps a day or may change to only needing one nap in the afternoon. Some toddlers go through a period of not taking any naps at all. All these variations are normal and unless your child begins having difficulty going to bed at the appropriate time, or has difficulty awakening in the morning, there is no need for concern.

Move from crib to regular bed – There is no “right” time to move your child, but a good gauge to use is when he is able to crawl out of the crib on his own. At this point, you may have already moved your child from his crib to a bed. If not, realize that this can be a traumatic time for a child. He will be leaving the familiarity of his old crib for a larger, unfamiliar bed. To make the transition easier, keep his bedtime routine the same. Sometimes a toddler bed, which is the same size as the crib, can help make the transition easier as well.

INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

Car Restraints – All 50 states have passed laws that require children to ride in approved child passenger safety seats. He should be restrained in a forward facing, federally approved, properly installed car safety seat. The safest place for a child to be restrained in a car is in the middle of the back seat. If your child must be restrained in the front seat of a car with a passenger side airbag, make sure that the care seat is as far back as possible from the dashboard. If your child safety seat must be secured with a shoulder harness, make sure you use a locking device to hold the belt in place (these usually come with the safety seat).

Smoke-free Environment – Passive smoke comes from two sources: Secondhand smoke, which is exhaled by the smoker, and Sidestream smoke, which rises from the end of a burning cigarette. Children exposed to passive smoke have more frequent and more severe respiratory tract infections than non-exposed children. Other problems made worse by exposure to passive smoke include: pneumonia, cough, bronchitis, croup, laryngitis, wheezing, bronchiolitis, asthma, flu, ear infections, middle ear fluid and blockage, sore throats, eye irritation, and SIDS. If you smoke, QUIT. If you can't quit, NEVER SMOKE INSIDE YOUR HOME, NEVER SMOKE IN THE CAR, and NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD WITH SOMEONE WHO SMOKES.

NUTRITION

Encourage your child to eat three meals a day with the family. They also need 2-3 snacks per day, one mid-morning, one mid-afternoon, and perhaps one at bedtime. Children should eat a varied diet with all four food groups represented (dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables, and breads/starch). Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Let everyone talk about his or her day or plans for the day.

ORAL HEALTH

Use a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste and a soft toothbrush to clean your child's teeth

twice a day.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION

Spend time playing with your child each day. Appropriate toys for this age include beginner's jigsaw puzzles, nesting toys, unbreakable containers, board books with large pictures and simple stories, connecting toys, large crayons and stuffed animals.

Listen to and show respect for your child. Make sure your child feels that he and what he/she thinks is important.

BEHAVIOR

Curiosity about body parts may develop at this time. This is perfectly normal. Most children learn by touching and will probably touch their genitals when they find them, much like they touched and held their feet when they realized they had them. This too is also normal and you shouldn't make a big deal out of it. Answer all questions honestly and simply.

SAFETY

Falls – Keep crib mattress at lowest setting and the sides up. Keep the crib free of any objects that your child could stack and climb on to get out. Use gates at the top and bottom of stairways after your child begins to crawl and walk. If your child does fall and seems to be acting abnormally in any way, call your doctor.

Burns – Never hold child while smoking, drinking a hot liquid, or cooking on a hot stove or grill. Never allow anyone to smoke around your child. Set water heater setting to 120 degrees F or lower to prevent scalding. Do not allow child to crawl or walk near a hot oven, space heater, or furnace vents. Place plug covers on all outlets.

Choking – Check all toys for sharp edges and for small parts that could be pulled or broken off. Keep crib or bed away from windows with mini blind cords. Never give child any hard food or small object that could cause choking. Never leave small objects in your child's play area.

Drowning – Never leave child alone in the tub or near a pool of water no matter how shallow it is. Children can drown in just a few inches of water. Never leave child alone around containers of water like buckets, wading pools, sinks, and open toilets.

Poisoning – Store all medicines and cleaning products up and out of reach in locked cabinets. Use safety latches on drawers and cabinets. Keep the number of your local poison control and emergency room next to every telephone and make sure that you keep syrup of ipecac accessible.

Guns – Guns are not recommended in homes occupied by children. If you do own a gun, keep it unloaded, locked out of sight, and lock up ammunition in a separate location.

Outdoors – Hold on to your toddler whenever you are near traffic. Set up fences or other barriers to keep kids away from the street, pool, and other hazards. Make sure there is grass, sand, wood chips, or other soft surfaces under outdoor play equipment.

IMMUNIZATIONS

None required at this visit unless your child is behind on immunizations and needs to catch up.