



## Care Tips: 2-Year-Old

### **Child can:**

Do lots of neat stuff now. Run, climb, and walk alone up and down stairs. Enjoys stories, even though he may squirm and can't sit still for long. Use lots of words and put them into sentences.

### **Safety**

Your child loves to explore on foot, pedaling or climbing. Make sure you are teaching you child good safety habits, like wearing a bike helmet, staying away from the street and staying in the yard. Check your child's play area often for hazards like broken glass, holes and unlocked gates. Be sure that the surface under any play equipment is soft and can help absorb a fall. Remember; buckle your child in a safety seat every time he rides in the car. Secure the safety seat in the back seat. Don't allow children to play in or around cars. Check behind your car before backing up. Never leave your child alone in the car. Make sure all children get out of the car with you when you reach your destination.

If you have a gun, keep it unloaded and locked up.

### **Nutrition**

Your child's appetite may change daily. Some days, your child may like everything you serve or nothing at all. Don't let this upset you. Just offer new foods (one at a time) every few days – maybe prepare it in a different way. When your child is ready to try it, he will. Make meal time a learning experience and a happy time.

Is it time to re-certify your child for WIC? Go ahead and make an appointment.

### **Elimination or "Going to the Bathroom"**

At age 2, you probably have already attempted to potty train your child. If not or if you are still trying, here are a few useful hints:

- Explain or show how you, daddy, brother or sister uses the toilet.
- Read to your child as he sits on the toilet; he'll stay longer.
- Praise success but don't fuss if an "accident" occurs.

### **Dental Care**

Now that your child is "moving around" more, injuries to the mouth often occur. Do not ignore facial injuries, falls or bumps of any kind. A tooth that is fractured has changed color or position should be looked at by your dentist. Parents need to be in charge of tooth brushing to assure that all tooth surfaces are adequately cleaned. You can let your toddler "brush" while you brush your own teeth. Praise him when he tries. Do not use toothpaste on his brush; use only a thin smear that you can see through, since he may swallow some of it. After your toddler "brushes" his teeth, you will need to brush his teeth again to be sure all the teeth are receiving the proper attention and care. If your child has not visited the dentist yet, now is a good time to make his first appointment. Don't forget – brush, brush, brush!

## **Immunizations**

At age 2, your child should have most of his shots (a few more will be given at school entry). Do check your child's shot record and call the Immunization Unit in Greensboro or High Point at 336-641-3245 if you have any questions. Also, check with your child's health care provider for information regarding the influenza (flu) vaccine. Visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) for a complete immunization schedule.

## **Exercise**

Getting enough exercise is usually not a problem for most 2-year-olds; however, if you need some ideas, try:

- Walks in a park. Children like to explore and name all things they see.
- Riding tricycles. Don't forget the helmet.
- Swimming lessons.

## **Signs and Symptoms of Illness**

Most parents worry about their child being sick and not knowing it. The big question is when to call or go to the doctor. The best rule is to call your doctor immediately if your child looks or acts differently. It will help both you and your health care provider if you can tell him specifically what is different.

## **Behavior/Discipline**

This time in a child's life is sometimes called the "Terrible Twos," but it doesn't have to be terrible. Your child is learning to be on his own and to use the word "No." He can seem stubborn and not follow your directions at times, but remember this is normal (even though it can be hard to deal with).

Here are a couple of ideas you can use to deal with undesirable behavior:

- Ignore the behavior. Sometime ignoring the behavior may help change to change it. For example, if your child yells to get your attention, ignore the outburst but praise a lowered voice.
- Use "time-out." For example, if your child bites, say firmly, "No biting, time-out!" Then put the child in a chair somewhere away from any activity. One or two minutes will be long enough for a 2-year-old. At the end of time-out, your child should be allowed to rejoin the activity or group.

## **Sexuality**

Children are learning a lot about family relationships now. They watch how Mom and Dad interact and act shyly around strangers. Children learn much from us, so remember to model healthy behaviors and relationships. Age 2 is an appropriate time to teach your child names of body parts, including genitals ("private parts"). Teaching correct names shows our child that there is no shame associated with having genitals. They will also be able to tell you in a clear way when there is a problem involving any of their body parts.

## **Lead poisoning**

Your child needs a lead-screening test if he did not receive one at age 1. Elevated lead levels in children can cause many problems, including brain damage. To prevent lead poisoning, here are a few tips:

- Do not let your child eat dirt or paint chips.
- Do not cook or serve food in pottery or ceramic dishes containing lead.
- Do not burn painted boards, newspaper or wrapping paper.

For more information contact Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health at 336-641-7777 or [www.myguilford.com](http://www.myguilford.com)