

## Vaccines

### Vaccines your child may need.

Make sure your child's vaccines are up to date. At 18 months, they may receive some or all of the following vaccines:

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)
- Hepatitis A
- Flu
- COVID-19

In the US and Washington state, we continue to have outbreaks of diseases that are prevented by vaccines. For the best protection, make sure your family is up to date on vaccines. Check to make sure your child's current vaccines are in the Washington Immunization Information System. You have the right to review your child's records, ask questions, and make corrections. Talk with your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions. You can also ask your child's doctor or nurse for a copy of your child's vaccine records.

To see and download your family's vaccine records online go to [myirmobile.com](http://myirmobile.com).

## Oral Health

### Dental care and checkups are important.

Your child's baby teeth are important because they keep space for permanent teeth. Brush their teeth after breakfast and before bedtime. Check your child's teeth by lifting their lips and looking near the gums and behind their front teeth. Take your child to a dentist if you see pale or dark spots on the teeth. Spots may be a sign of tooth decay.

Frequent snacking or sipping sweet drinks, including juices or sports drinks, can cause cavities. Teeth need "breaks" between meals and snacks to prevent cavities.

If your child has not had a first dental checkup, now is the time. Call your child's dentist to make an appointment. For help finding dental care, call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or go to [helpmegrowwa.org](http://helpmegrowwa.org).



Lift my lip to check my teeth for pale or dark spots.

## Nutrition and Physical Activity

### Tips for feeding your toddler:

By this age, your child is ready to enjoy the foods your family eats. However, your child will want to do it their own way. Your child is not growing as fast, so their appetite may not be as big as it once was. Here are some helpful tips for feeding your toddler:

- **Small stomachs need many meals.** Your child's stomach is small, so they need to eat every 2-3 hours. Snacks are like little meals. Include a combination of food groups at each meal and snack, such as small pieces of apples and cheese or tortilla and beans.
- **Offer new food along with a favorite food.** Do not force them to eat or try foods.
- **Eat together.** Eat with your child to help them learn to like the foods your family likes. The whole family eats better when you sit together.
- **Give small portions.** If your child is still hungry, they can have more.
- **Limit sugary snacks and drinks.** They can cause cavities. Offer water between meals and snacks, not juice. Your child will eat better when they come to the table hungry.
- **If you're breast or chest feeding, that's great!** Human milk gives your child good nutrition.

- **Offer something from each food group at meals.** Add variety. Offer different types of cut up, cooked vegetables and soft fruits.
- **Offer whole milk in a cup at mealtime for children between 12 and 24 months.** Milk provides protein, calcium, vitamin D, and magnesium for healthy bones and teeth. Offer water at snack time.

The best way to raise a healthy eater is to be patient with your child and avoid pressuring them to eat.

If you're worried about your child's growth or eating habits, talk with their doctor or nurse.

For more nutrition information and resources, visit [doh.wa.gov/nutrition-education](http://doh.wa.gov/nutrition-education).



Eat with me and offer something from each food group.

## Family Support and Routines

### Feeling frustrated?

Sometimes it's hard to be the parent and caregiver you want to be. It is good to have a plan for what to do when you feel frustrated or overwhelmed. Here are some things to try:

- Make sure your child is in a safe place.
- Walk a few feet away until you calm down.
- Take some deep breaths to help yourself relax.
- Call a friend or relative who will listen and care. It can help to share your thoughts and feelings with someone.



Make sure others who care for your child also know what to do when they feel upset, frustrated, or angry. Talk to your healthcare provider, take a parenting class, or join a parenting group to get support. Ask about groups and classes at your local health department, community center, college, place of worship, clinic, or hospital.

For help and advice, you can also call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-4673 or visit [parenttrust.org](http://parenttrust.org).

Why don't parents need bookmarks?

Because the right page is marked with a squashed piece of cereal!



**It's the law! Use a rear-facing car seat until age 2 or your child reaches the maximum weight or height for the seat.**

- **Keep looking out.** Look around in parking lots and driveways where children play.
- **Always hold your child's hand near vehicles.** Ask others to always do the same with your child.

**Never leave children in a car without an adult, even for a short time.** Leaving a child in a parked car is very dangerous and can be deadly. Children left in a car can suffer heat stroke very quickly. They can also start the car rolling or lock themselves in.

**What makes a playground safe?** Always check playground equipment before your child begins to play. Stay close to your child, especially when they climb. Safe play areas should have soft sand, wood chips, or rubber padding under climbing toys and swings. They should have small slides and gyms made for toddlers separate from equipment for older children. Make sure swings have seats that hold children in on all sides. For more information, visit [bit.ly/KHplaygroundsafety](https://bit.ly/KHplaygroundsafety).

**Help your toddler safely explore the world!**

It is important for your child to feel safe as they start to explore. Your child will want to check in with you for reassurance. Let your child know you are still there to protect them from possible danger.

Your child may continue to do things you have said are off limits over and over again. They are not trying to disobey or manipulate you. This is a normal part of how toddlers learn about the world around them.

Toddlers also explore the world with their mouths. Keep things locked away or out of reach that you don't want your child to have. Install cabinet locks in the kitchen and bathroom. Close doors or install gates to keep your toddler out of certain rooms. Install window stops or guards or keep windows closed in rooms where your toddler spends time.

If you think your child has eaten, drank, or touched a harmful substance or if you have questions, stay calm and call the Washington Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.

Call 911 if your child has collapsed, has stopped breathing, has trouble breathing, or will not wake up.

# Safety

**How to use a car seat properly.**

Your child must ride in the back seat of your vehicle (until 13 years old). They must also be rear-facing in a car seat until age 2 or they reach the maximum weight or height for the car seat. Check the car seat's instructions to find the height and weight limits.

After they are too big for a rear-facing car seat, use a forward-facing seat with a 5-point harness. Make sure the harness is snug, and the chest clip is at armpit level. The harness is snug if you cannot pinch any slack in the strap at the shoulder.

At this age, it is normal for children to try to climb out of their car seats. Never let your child ride unbuckled. Bring a special book or toy in the car to help keep your child occupied.

If your child tries to get out, a good way to teach them to stay seated is to:

- **Stop the car in a safe place right away.**

- **Firmly explain to your child that the car will not go until they get back in the seat.**
- **Wait until your child sits down, then buckle the harness again.**

Teach by example. Use your seat belt on every trip and make sure your passengers do, too. For more seat belt facts, go to [togetherwegetthere.com/seat-belts](https://togetherwegetthere.com/seat-belts).

To find the nearest car seat inspection services visit, [wacarseats.com](https://wacarseats.com).

**Dangers are in driveways and parking lots.**

Your child is so small that a driver may not be able to see them between cars or when backing up. You can help keep your child and others safe by doing these things:

- **Check around your vehicle.** Walk all the way around to check for kids, toys, and pets before you get in and start the motor.
- **Roll down windows and turn off music.** Listen as you back up your car.

# Growth and Development

**Check in with your child's development.**

Your child is growing and changing quickly. Ask your doctor or nurse for a developmental screening. Talk with them when you have questions.

To help keep track of your child's completed developmental screening records, go to [doh.wa.gov/strongstart](https://doh.wa.gov/strongstart).

**Tips for handling difficult behavior:**

When your child throws a tantrum or gets upset, try to step back and think about the situation. What are they trying to tell you? Is your child hungry, tired, or upset about

something? Take a deep breath. Try to think calmly about how to help your child feel better.

Let your child know you can tell when they feel unhappy. Talk calmly about what is happening and offer some solutions.

For example, "I see you are very upset. Let's sit together until you feel better." Or, "I can see you really wanted to play with the houseplants. They are not toys. Let's find something else to play with. What about these pots and pans?"

Pay attention to the things your child does and let them know you appreciate it. This shows you care about what your child does.

**Thanks for reading!**

Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 2 years old with information on:

- Temper tantrums.
- Toilet training.
- Safe toys.



**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](https://www.watchmegrowwa.org)



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