

### Your child may need a check-up

Most doctors recommend a check-up at 2½ years. Ask your doctor or clinic if you should make an appointment for your child. This is a good time to talk about any questions you have about how he is developing. Make sure he sees a dentist once a year.

### Be sure your child's immunizations are up-to-date!

Immunizations are the most important way to protect your child against serious diseases. Your child will meet the immunization requirements for both child care and preschool as long as she has had all the recommended vaccines. If she hasn't, now is a great time to catch up. She may be required to stay home from child care or preschool during a disease outbreak if she's not up-to-date.

Keeping immunizations current is also important for you, other household members, and people who care for your child. Ask your doctor or nurse about immunizations recommended for adults. For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules). Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you get a flu shot every year?
- Have you had the whooping cough shot (Tdap)?
- Do you have your own immunization record card?
- Are your child care providers vaccinated?

### Hand washing – do it right and do it often!

Germs that cause illnesses can pass from your child's hands to his mouth. Teach your child to cough or sneeze into the bend of his elbow, instead of into his hands.

It is important to always wash his hands:

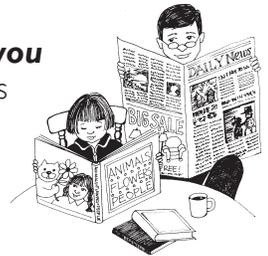
- Before eating.
- After coughing or sneezing into his hands.
- After using the toilet.
- After playing outside or with pets.
- After coming home from child care or preschool.

Wash your hands with your child to show him it is important. Watch to be sure he does a good job.

- Use regular soap and warm water. Regular soap works as well as antibacterial soap and may be better for your child. **Only** use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- Wash for about 20 seconds. (Sing the Happy Birthday song all the way through to make sure you've washed long enough.)
- Rinse hands well and dry.

### Your child learns from watching you

What you **do** is just as important as what you **say**. As a parent, you teach your child many things by talking to her. However, she also learns from watching and copying you and other family members.



Practice healthy habits, such as getting regular exercise and not watching too much TV. Make sure she sees you brushing your teeth daily. Encourage healthy eating by eating nutritious foods yourself. If you smoke, now is a great time to stop. For information about quitting, call 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669) or visit [www.quitline.com](http://www.quitline.com).

### Complementary medicine

Tell all your child's providers about any complementary health approaches (naturopathy, chiropractic, homeopathy, etc.) your child uses. Each provider should be aware of everything you do to manage your child's health. This will help you get the best and safest care for your child.

Be careful when choosing vitamins and herbal supplements. They don't go through the same testing as medicines do before going to market and are not tested for safety or effectiveness in children. Your child may react differently than an adult would to these products.

**For information on talking to your health care provider visit:** <http://nccam.nih.gov/timetotalk>

# Keeping Your Toddler Healthy and Safe

## Avoid food battles

Be patient while your child finds out what foods she likes. Offer her a variety of healthy foods and let her choose from them. She may like a food this week and refuse it next week! She may like foods prepared a certain way, such as applesauce instead of apple slices. At mealtime, include at least one healthy food you know she likes. Visit [www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html) for help dealing with a picky eater.

Avoid forcing your child to eat, rewarding her for eating, or punishing her for not eating. Making your child eat a food she doesn't want will not teach her to like it. If your child tells you she has finished her meal, let her stop eating. Children usually know when they have had enough. Wait until snack time to offer more food. Offer high protein snacks that are low in sugar and starch.

Try to make meals a pleasant, family time. Plan to eat together at least once a day. Talk with your child about what she did during the day. Ask about her favorite part of the day.

## Start helping your child problem-solve

Show your toddler how you expect him to behave. This will help him learn to control his own behavior. It will also help him learn how his actions affect others. For example, if your child throws his toy truck:

1. Show him how he can play with the truck. "This is one way to play with the truck and be safe. Can you drive the truck like this?"
2. Give your child a chance to play with the truck safely. If he keeps throwing it, suggest another toy. "I can see that you want to throw. Let's put away the trucks and get a ball we can throw."



## Finding a preschool

If you choose to send your child to preschool, it is important to start looking now for one that both you and your child like. There are many different kinds of programs to choose from. Here are a few things to do that may help you decide.

- Make a list of the things that are most important to both you and your child, and take it with you.
- Visit more than one preschool, talk to staff, and watch a class. Talk with other parents at the schools.
- Take your child to visit your final choices. Let her help make the decision if possible.

Visit [www.del.wa.gov/care](http://www.del.wa.gov/care) for more information.

## Lock up guns

All children, **even toddlers**, are in danger if they play with guns. If you have guns at home, unload them. Store them in a gun safe or lock box. Lock up bullets separately. Keep keys where children cannot get them. Find out if your child's other caregivers own guns. Make sure they are stored safely.

### Safe Gun Storage Information

[www.lokitup.org](http://www.lokitup.org)

## Keep matches and lighters out of reach

Young children are curious about fire. Children as young as age two can start fires and hurt themselves if they play with matches and lighters. If you have lighters and matches at home, keep them out of your child's reach and out of sight. Remember that even though you tell your child to stay away from stoves, fireplaces, and barbecues, you need to watch to make sure he does.

## Start the helmet habit early

Help your child get in the habit of wearing a helmet whenever she uses a toy with wheels or rides on the back of your bicycle. If you ride a bike, wear your helmet, too. Remember, your child learns from watching you.

## Closely watch your child in and around water

Children can drown in as little as two inches of water. They can slip away and go underwater quickly and quietly. An adult must always be within an arm's length whenever a toddler is in or around water. Talk with your provider about whether your child is ready for swimming lessons. But remember, even if your child has been in a water skills class, he can still drown.

Always stay with your child whenever he is in the bathroom or taking a bath. Empty the wading (kiddie) pool when you're not using it, keep garbage cans covered, and put fences around pools, hot tubs, and ponds. If a gate is needed, it should be self-closing and self-latching.

Make sure your child wears a life jacket when playing in or near the water, on a dock, or in a boat, raft, or inner tube. Set a good example and wear a life jacket yourself. Swim where there is a lifeguard on duty whenever you can. Learn child CPR. Call your local fire station for classes.

### WA State Drowning Prevention Project

[www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp)