

2½ Year Check Up

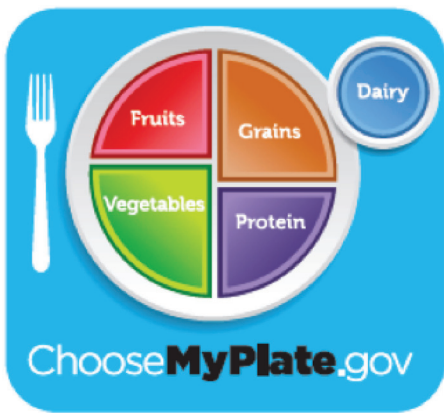
Well Child Appointments can be made online at AustinRegionalClinic.com.



Nutrition

During this period, your child's world continues to expand to include friends and others in the community. However, **parents remain the greatest influence on children's development**, including eating habits. Establishing healthy eating behaviors during this time in your child's life is essential for lifelong health.

To help your child establish healthy eating habits, **offer your child a variety of nutritious foods at scheduled mealtimes (3 daily--breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and snack times (2-3 daily)**. Structure and predictability foster a sense of security and help your child thrive. Avoid eating or grazing throughout the day by having set times for nutritious meals and snacks. Grazing can lead to unhealthy eating habits. Utilize the **MyPlate** visual diagram to include all 5 food groups during meals and snacks.



Family meals provide an opportunity for parents to model healthy eating behaviors for their children in a pleasant environment. Sit together as a family as often as possible and have your plate resemble the **MyPlate diagram** so that your child can see you eat and enjoy the healthy foods you are encouraging them to eat. Set a good example.

At age 2, your child's growth rate declines, often leading to a decreased

appetite and unpredictable amounts of food being eaten. **Food refusals, food jags (liking a food one day and not the next) and picky eating are still normal.** Children at this age can recognize internal cues of hunger and fullness. Don't worry if your child misses a meal or eats very little now and then. As parents, our job is to provide nutritious food for our child. **Parents are responsible for what, when, and where the family eats. Your child's job is to decide how much to eat.** Children can decide to eat what has been offered or to wait until the next meal or snack. Do not force a child to eat more. Never force a child to eat a vegetable. This will just create a battle or control issue. Remember it can take up to 12-15 times of presenting a vegetable before a child will eat it.

As parents we need to avoid offering only what the child likes or offering less nutritious foods because the child refuses to eat healthy foods that have been offered. Parents should not be short order cooks. **Remember the saying, "Parents provide and the child decides."**

Snacks

Recent research reveals that 86% of children consume some type of sweetened beverage, dessert, or unhealthy snack (sweet or salty) a day. In fact, it was more common for a child in this age range to have an unhealthy snack than to have a serving of fruits or vegetables. The most popular snack choices among toddlers and preschoolers are crackers, cookies, and candy. Children's stomachs are small, and they will not eat very much at each meal. Snacks should, therefore, be thought of as "mini-meals." **Fruits, vegetables, and protein are better choices for snack times to keep your child's diet healthy.** Sweets can be part of a healthy diet, but they should be thought of as an occasional treat and not a daily part of their diets.

Healthy Habits Tips

Use the 7-5-2-1-0 message, DAILY, to help promote a healthy lifestyle for your child.

- **7:** Eat breakfast daily and aim to have a family meal daily. Eating breakfast prevents children from getting too hungry and overeating later in the day---habits that lead to excess weight. If serving cereal, provide a breakfast cereal with at least 2 grams of fiber and less than 9 grams of sugar per serving.
- **5:** Serve your child at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- **2:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends less than 2 hours of screen time (TV, video games, recreational computer time, iPad, iPhones) per day for

Is my child overweight/obese?

Childhood obesity is increasing at an alarming rate in the United States. According to a 2011 report from the Institute of Medicine, slightly over 20 percent of children aged 2 -5 are overweight or obese. Contrary to the belief that young children will "grow out it," excess weight persists into later life and increases the risk for weight-related diseases in both childhood and adulthood. Body Mass Index (BMI) is widely used to help define overweight and obese children. BMI compares height and weight and varies by age and sex. A BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile is defined as overweight, and a BMI above the 95th is defined as obese. For children 2 to 3 years of age between 85% and 95% for BMI, as little as 1 extra sweetened drink a day (eg, juice, soda, fruit drink) doubles their risk of having a BMI greater than 95% in the following year. BMI and BMI % will be shared at your child's visit. Do not hesitate to ask your child's doctor about any concerns you have about your child's weight or eating habits.

children **over 2 years of age**. Ways to encourage this are to turn the TV off during meals and to keep the TV and computer in a central location of the house and **out of a child's bedroom**. TVs are often introduced into the bedroom during the transition from crib to bed as a sleep aid, but **AVOID** this practice as it often leads to sleep problems and increased screen time.

- **1:** Provide at least **1 hour** of physical activity for your child per day. Routine participation in activities as a family, such as playing outside or going to the park, help build family togetherness. At this age, the most enjoyable way to encourage activity is to just let your child have supervised outdoor play. Limit your use of objects like a stroller that keep your toddler inactive.
- **0:** **Almost zero sugar-sweetened beverages:** water and milk are the best drinks for your child. **At 2 years you should transition your child to 1 % or skim milk from whole or 2% milk.** Discuss this with your doctor. Soda, sports

drinks, fruit drinks, and even 100% fruit juice all contain a large amount of sugar, so try to provide **almost no** sugared beverages for your child. **The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting the amount of 100% juice in your child's diet to no more than 4-6 ounces per day for children 1 to 6 years of age.**

- For more information on how to encourage healthy habits for children 0-5 years of age, please visit: www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy

Dental Care

Dental Caries (tooth decay) can be prevented by:

- Brushing your child's teeth with a soft nylon toothbrush twice a day using a small amount of a fluoride toothpaste.
- Making healthy food, snack, and drink choices daily. Limit juice. Fruit juice should be only given at meals. Avoid carbonated drinks and other sugar sweetened beverages. Frequent exposure to sweets increases tooth decay.

- Reducing exposure to tooth decay causing bacteria by not sharing eating utensils (spoon and fork) or drinks with your child.
- Drinking fluoride-supplemented water.

For more information look at the pediatric dentistry website www.aapd.org. For patients insured by Medicaid, you can find a Medicaid dental provider by searching www.tmhp.org or by calling 877-847-8377 (THSteps Hotline).

Development

Sleep

Evidence suggests a decrease in sleep duration across all age groups over the past 20 years. The most pronounced decrease is in children younger than 3. **Toddlers between 12-36 months should sleep 12-14 hours in a 24 hour period.** Good sleep hygiene should be fostered, which includes having a routine and set bedtime. This should not include having a TV in the bedroom or falling asleep with the TV turned on.

Social Emotional

Around two and a half years of age your child will move out of the incredibly busy and action-oriented toddler phase to a more verbal time known as early childhood or the pre-school years.

From about two and a half years to five years, children are still very active but they have learned enough language and enough of the thinking that goes along with language to be able to join in with words as well as action. You can now talk to your child, have what you say listened to and understood, and even get a reasonable response. This improved ability to communicate makes your child seem like a "real person." This small person has many more skills than she did six months ago. With a little help she can wash her face, put on her shoes, get a drink of water from a faucet, climb in and out of chairs etc. She feels more confident in managing her own little world and is ready for the exciting business of exploring the wider world. During this new phase she will need more than care from the adults in her world. She now needs companionship. While every childhood phase has its frustrations, this period can also be a magical and endearing time for parent and child alike.

Tips to help social and emotional development:

- **As children's language skills improve, they and their parents experience increasing pleasure in**

Feeding Guide for Children 2 to 3 Years of Age

Food	Portion Size	Servings	Comments
Milk and dairy	½ cup (4 oz.)	4-5 (16-20 oz. total)	The following may be substituted for ½ cup fluid milk: ½ -¾ oz. cheese, ½ cup yogurt, 2 ½ tbsp. nonfat dry milk
Meat, fish, poultry, or equivalent	1-2 oz.	2 (2-4 oz. total)	The following may be substituted for 1 oz. meat, fish, or poultry: 1 egg, 2 tbsp. peanut butter, 4-5 tbsp. cooked legumes
Vegetables and fruit		4-5	
<i>Vegetables</i>			Include one green leafy or yellow vegetable for vitamin A, such as carrots, spinach, broccoli, winter squash or greens
Cooked	2-3 tbsp.		
Raw	Few pieces		
<i>Fruit</i>			Include one vitamin C-rich fruit, vegetable, or juice, such as citrus juices, orange, grapefruit, strawberries, melon, tomato, or broccoli
Raw	½ - 1 small		
Canned (<i>own juice</i>)	2-4 tbsp.		
Juice	3-4 oz.		
Grain Products		3-4	The following may be substituted for 1 slice of bread: ½ cup of spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, or rice, 5 saltines, ½ English muffin or bagel, 1 tortilla, corn grits or posole
Whole grain or enriched bread	½ - 1 slice	**Aim to make ½ eaten grains, whole grains (example: brown rice, whole grain pasta, whole wheat bread)	
Cooked cereal	¼ - ½ cup		
Dry Cereal	½-1 cup		

talking together. When your child is speaking, listen attentively, and at times repeat what she says to clarify or emphasize that she is being listened to.

- **Consistent family routines, including regular play time together and clear limits help a child to develop a sense of security and self-control.**
- **Unexplained changes in physical environment (house moves, changes in preschool, even vacations) and unexpected events can cause fears in a child this age.** Reassure and talk to your child when changes in his routine or life occur.
- **Aim for daily family meals as they support language and social development.**
- **Children this age should feel comfortable playing side-by-side with other children, but cooperative play is still limited.** Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children, but supervise these play times. Your child is not ready to share. Having two of prized toys can help prevent battles.
- **Limit television and other screen time.** Children tend to imitate what they see. Do not allow your child to watch violent or adult programs or play violent video games.

Cognitive/Learning

Your 2½ year old's understanding of relationships between objects and persons in her life is increasing rapidly. She knows the correct action and roles and activities for more and more objects and persons every day. For example, the dog barks, mommy and daddy cook, a plane flies, the switch on the wall turns the light on, etc.

Children this age often like stories that are about activities in their daily life such as getting dressed, playing with toys, eating meals with the family and bedtime. Play behavior often imitates the activities that they see in their life, such as feeding a baby, talking on the phone or sweeping. A sense of order often emerges as they start to figure out their world. You may see your child lining up toys or grouping crayons by color.

Tips to help learning:

Expand your child's world and experiences by going to parks, zoos, nature outings, children's museums and story hour at the library. Look for simple educational programs that are geared toward children her age.

Read to your child for at least 20 minutes a day. Ideally you'll read to your child at least two times a day.

Often children want to be read the same story over and over. This is normal.

Children this age enjoy playful use of language such as word games and songs that involve movement like "itsy bitsy spider" and "ring around the rosie." Make up little songs that involve movement and daily life activities. Songs teach children about the world around them and the rhythm of language.

Children this age enjoy large puzzles and shape sorting toys. They are starting to understand the relationship between objects.

Speech & Language

Language development is the single most important intellectual accomplishment of early childhood and is a skill on which most later academic and social accomplishments depend. Observing speech and language skills provides a window into the developing mind. For this reason it is very important to know what is normal speech and language at this age and to recognize delays in their development.

Many people assume that preschool children with language delays or speech disorders will automatically catch up over time. This is not necessarily true. Although many children catch up without assistance, a significant number continue to have speech and language problems for many years and would benefit by early intervention. If problems with speech or language are noted, your child will need both a speech and language, as well as hearing evaluation.

A 2½ year old should be able to use a wide variety of two and four word phrases and have more than 100 word spoken vocabulary. Often phrases and sentences at this age are very abbreviated and simple. For example, a child this age may say, "Carrie hungry – want lunch" or "Daddy go bye-bye". This type of speech is normal.

If your child is not putting at least two to three words together or if people can not understand at least half of what your child says, ask your child's doctor about a speech and hearing evaluation. Also see the section on Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program.

Tips to help language development:

- **Young children process spoken language more slowly than older children and adults.** Be sure to give your child plenty of time to respond when you say something to him.
- **When your child speaks, listen attentively and repeat clearly what**

he says. If necessary clarify what he means, using correct grammar.

- **Read books together every day.** Not only will reading aloud together help with speech and language, but it will help him develop listening skills that will help in preschool and school.

Fine Motor (Hand & Finger) Skills



Finger movements at 2½ years are much better than the often whole-hand movements of a 2 year old. For

example she is able to manage puzzle pieces, string beads, and put snap blocks together much better than before. A 2½ year old should be able to wash and dry her hands, brush her teeth with help, put on simple clothes with help and copy a vertical line.

Tips to help hand and finger skills:

- **Provide items to draw with (crayons, paper, chalk, chalk board etc.). Encourage drawing circles on paper.**
- **Give your child lots of books to "read".** Encourage her to turn the pages as you read.
- **Find toys for your child that have parts that need to be manipulated like nuts, bolts and handles.**
- **String large beads.**

Gross Motor (Movement) Skills

Compared to the 2 year old child, gross motor coordination and strength are much improved in a 2½ year old. Movement can be altered much more rapidly than before. While running your child should be able to speed up, slow down, make turns and even come to a sudden stop. Your child should be able to walk on tiptoe, walk backwards, jump up and down in place, and throw a ball overhand.

It is not hard to find activities that will help your child develop his gross motor (movement) skills. He will be able to do that himself. All you need to do is join in and have fun. Children this age love piggyback rides, rolling on mats, and climbing playground equipment. The more running and climbing your games involve, the better. These activities will strengthen his body and develop his coordination.

If possible set aside specific times during the day when he can go outside to run, play and explore. Just be aware that his judgment and self-control lag considerably behind his motor skills. You will need to watch carefully, keeping injury prevention and safety in mind as he plays.

Safety

Injuries are the leading cause of death in children younger than four years of age. Most of these injuries can be prevented.

Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do. Children learn fast, and before you know it your child will be running, riding a tricycle, and using tools. Your child is at special risk for injuries from falls, drowning, poisons, burns, and car accidents. Your child doesn't understand dangers or remember "no" while playing.

Falls

Because your child's physical abilities are so great now, she will find an endless variety of dangerous situations at home and in the neighborhood. Your child can fall off play equipment, out of windows, down stairs, off a bike, or anything that can be climbed. Be sure the surface under play equipment is soft enough to absorb a fall. Use a rubber mat, or 12 inches of sand, saw dust, or wood chips underneath play equipment.

Household items may pose a danger to your child. Children can have serious injuries from improperly secured television sets that topple on them.

Avoid the recreational use of trampolines at home. Children, especially those 5 years or younger, are at risk of serious trampoline-related injuries.

Lock the doors to any dangerous areas. Use gates on stairways and install operable window guards above the first floor. Fence in the play yard.

Burns

The kitchen can be a dangerous place for your child, especially when you are cooking. If your child is under foot, hot liquids, grease and hot foods can spill on him or her and cause serious burns. Find something safe for your child to do while you are cooking.

Remember that kitchen appliances and other hot surfaces such as irons, ovens, wall heaters and outdoor grills can burn your child long after you have finished using them. If your child does get burned, immediately put cold (but not ice cold) water on the burned

area. Then cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth. Call your doctor for all burns. To protect your child from tap water scalds, make sure that the maximum temperature of your hot water heater is 120°F or less.

All homes should have smoke alarms. Test the batteries on your smoke alarm every month to be sure they work. Change the batteries twice a year on a date you'll remember, such as Daylight Saving Time and Standard Time change dates.

Water Safety

Most drowning injuries occur in backyard pools. Water safety begins at home. Never leave a child alone in or near water, even for a moment. Constant adult supervision is essential. Children can drown in wading pools or bathtubs in just a few inches of water.

Use Coast-Guard approved personal flotation devices (life jackets) if boating.

If you own a pool, be sure it is enclosed by a fence or wall with a self-closing, self-locking gate. Avoid fences, like chain-link, that can be climbed easily.

Sun Exposure

Avoid the sun during the hours of 10am to 4pm. If outside, stay in the shade, use a hat to protect your child's face, and use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater and that is approved for children. Sun exposure during childhood can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin later in life.

Poisonings

Your child will be able to open any drawer and climb anywhere curiosity leads. Your child may swallow anything he or she finds. Use only household products and medicines that are absolutely necessary and keep them safely capped and out of sight and reach. Keep all products in their original containers.

If your child does put something poisonous in his mouth, call the Poison Help Line immediately and do not make your child vomit. **Add the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) to**

your cell phone contacts and display to number prominently in your home.

Gun Safety

Children in homes where guns are present are in more danger of being shot by themselves, their friends, or family members than being injured by an intruder. It is best to keep all guns out of the home. **If you choose to keep a gun, keep it unloaded and in a locked place separate from the ammunition.** Handguns are especially dangerous. Ask if homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.

Car Safety

Car accidents are the greatest danger to your child's life and health. To prevent serious injuries, correctly **USE a car safety seat EVERY TIME** your child is in the car. All infants and toddlers should ride in a **Rear-Facing Car Seat until they are at least 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat's manufacturer.** Children from 20 to 40 pounds should be placed in a car safety seat. **From forty to 80 pounds and up to 4 feet 9 inches your child should be in a belt-positioning booster seat.** Remember, the safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.

For more information about car safety seats and for information about having your seat checked for proper installation call 1-800-252-8255 (safe riders program) or 1-866-SEAT-CHECK (seatcheck.org).

Do not allow your child to play or ride a tricycle in the street. Your child should play in a fenced yard or playground. Driveways are also dangerous. Walk behind your car before you back out of your driveway to be sure your child is not behind your car. You cannot always see your child through the rear view mirror.

Reading Suggestions/ Resources

"Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5", The American Academy of Pediatrics

www.healthychildren.org, A parenting website developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Disponible en español.

www.choosemyplate.gov, USDA Dietary Guidelines. This website has child-friendly materials and practical information for parents.

www.AustinRegionalClinic.com, The ARC website contains a number of educational resources.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Programs

The State of Texas has a network of local community programs (Early Childhood Intervention or ECI) that provide services to families and their children, birth to age three, with developmental delays. The cost of services provided are based on family income. Children are eligible for ECI services if they are under age three and have developmental delays or conditions (such as Down's, prematurity, vision or hearing impairments) that have a high possibility of resulting in a developmental delay. Anyone may refer a child for ECI services. If you believe that your child is delayed or has a condition that could lead to delays, please ask your doctor to refer you. You may also call 1-800-628-5115 or visit the ECI website at www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis for the ECI program closest to you.