



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## Well Child Care at 3 Years

### Nutrition

Mealtime should be a pleasant time for the family. Your child should be feeding himself completely on his own now. Buy and serve healthy foods and limit junk foods. Your child will still have a daily snack. Choose and eat healthy snacks such as cheese, fruit, or yogurt. Televisions should never be on during mealtime. If you are having problems at mealtime, ask your healthcare provider for advice. Children this age seldom eat “3 square meals a day”, but more likely 1 good meal and multiple smaller meals and snacks. If your child refuses something you’ve prepared it usually means he is not hungry. Trust your child to determine when he is hungry or full and never encourage him to eat food he did not ask you for your kitchen is not a fast-food restaurant and you don’t need to fix another meal if your child refuses what you have already prepared. This only encourages him to be a picky eater.

### Development

Children at this age often want to do things by themselves; this is normal. Patience and encouragement will help 3-year-olds develop new skills and build self-confidence. Many children still require diapers during the day or night. Avoid putting too many demands on the child or shaming him about wearing diapers. Let your child know how proud and happy you are as toilet training progresses.

### Behavior Control

For behaviors that you would like to encourage in your child, try to "catch your child being good." That is, tell your child how proud you are when he does what you want him to do. Be positive and enthusiastic when your child does things to please you. Here are some good methods for helping children learn about rules:

- Divert and substitute. If a child is playing with something you don't want him to have, replace it with another object or toy that the child enjoys. This approach avoids a fight and does not place children in a situation where they'll say "no."
- Teach and lead. Have as few rules as necessary and enforce them. These rules should be rules important for the child's safety. If a rule is broken, after a short, clear, and gentle explanation, immediately find a place for your child to sit alone for 3 minutes. It is very important that a "time-out" comes immediately after a rule is broken. Time-outs can serve as an excellent tool to teach a child a rule. Time outs require skill and careful planning. If you use time-out, be sure to read about the technique before using it.
- Make consequences as logical as possible. For example, if you don't stay in your car seat, the car doesn't go. If you throw your food, you don't get any more and may be hungry.
- Be consistent with discipline. Remember that encouragement and praise are more likely to motivate a young child than threats and fear. Do not threaten a consequence that you do not carry

out. If you say there is a consequence for misbehavior and the child misbehaves, carry through with the consequence gently, but firmly.

## **Reading and Electronic Media**

Children learn reading skills while watching you read. They start to figure out that printed symbols have certain meanings. Young children love to participate directly with you and the book. They like to open flaps, ask questions, and make comments. It is important to set rules about television watching. Limit total TV and electronic media time to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day. Do not have a TV or DVD player in your child's bedroom. As a parent you need to monitor what your child is watching on TV or what they are doing on their tablets. It may be a good idea to start using the parental settings to protect your child from seeing something they are not supposed to see.

## **Dental Care**

After meals and before bedtime, clean your toddler's teeth. Many children exhibit their independence by demanding to brush their own teeth, but infants and children younger than 4 years may not have the motor skills to do so. When a child can tie their shoes then they are able to brush their own teeth. If you have not made a dental appointment, now is a good time to find a pediatric dentist. If you have not found a pediatric dentist, you can ask Dr. Fikkert or her staff for recommendations.

## **Safety Tips**

Child-proof the home: Go through every room in your house and remove anything that is valuable, dangerous, or messy. Preventive child-proofing will stop many possible discipline problems. Don't expect a child not to get into things just because you say no.

### Choking prevention

Although a 3 year old is eating a wide variety of foods he still may have immature chewing and swallowing skills, it is still important to continue cutting high-risk foods, like grapes or hot dogs into small pieces. Chewing gum should be avoided.

### Fires and Burns

- Practice a fire escape plan.
- Check smoke detectors. Replace the batteries if necessary.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

### Sun Protection

- Always apply Sunscreen with an SPF greater than 15 when your child is outside. Reapply every 2 hours.
- Have your child wear a hat.
- Avoid prolonged time in the sun between 11:00am and 3:00pm.
- Wear Sun protection clothing for summer.

## Pets

- You must keep a close eye on both child and pet when they are interacting with each other.
- Try to keep your child away from animal feeding areas to reduce the risk of both bites and the ingestion of animal food.
- Watch for signs of either your child or pet is becoming anxious or overwhelmed.

## Falls

- Do not allow your child to climb on ladders, chairs, or cabinets.
- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.

## Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- The back seat is the safest place for children to ride until age 13 years.
- Continue to use size-appropriate forward-facing car safety seat that is properly installed in the back seat according to the manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle owner's manual.
- Most 3 year olds are not tall enough or don't weight enough to ride safely in a booster seat. It is safest for a child to ride in a car safety seat with a 5 point harness until the child reaches the manufacture's limit for weight and height.

## Pedestrian and Tricycle Safety

- Hold onto your child's hand when you are near traffic.
- Practice crossing the street. Make sure your child stays right with you.
- Do not allow riding of a tricycle or other riding toys on driveways or near traffic.
- All family members should use a bicycle helmet, even when riding a tricycle.
- Do not allow young brothers or sisters to watch over your child.
- Supervise all outdoor play.

## Water Safety

- Watch your child constantly when he is around any water.
- Provide "touch supervision" any time your toddler is in or near water, even small play swimming pools. This means that a parent or responsible adult is within an arm's reach of the child at all times.
- Children should always wear a properly fitted US Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat or other watercraft. Simply blow-up water wings do NOT prevent drowning.

## Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and other chemicals locked away.
- Put the poison center number on all phones. **1-800-222-1222**
- Buy medicines in containers with safety caps.
- Do not put poisons into drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

## Strangers

- Teach your child the first and last names of family members.
- Teach your child never to go anywhere with a stranger.

### Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.
- Teach your child that even though smoking is unhealthy, he should be civil and polite when he is around people who smoke.

### Immunizations

Routine vaccinations are usually completed before this age. Before starting kindergarten your child will need vaccinations. Children should receive an annual flu shot. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about whether your child needs any vaccines.

### Next Visit

A once-a-year check-up is recommended. Your child will be receiving vaccines at his 4 year checkup.

## Normal Development: 3 Years Old

### Physical Development

- Jumps, gallops, tiptoes, and runs smoothly.
- Can walk backwards a long distance.
- May stumble and fall often.
- Rides a tricycle.
- Can pour from a pitcher or milk carton using both hands.
- Undresses self, but needs help with dressing.
- Uses crayons.

### Emotional Development

- Becomes more relaxed and flexible.
- Cries and hits at times.
- Quickly switches from shyness to high spirits and back.
- May show fear of unfamiliar objects or activities.
- May want to be a baby at times.
- Starts to talk about dreams.

### Social Development

- Is keenly interested in family activities.
- Sees parents as heroes.
- Seeks approval from adults.

- Tests limits constantly.
- Often prefers to play alone.
- May have an imaginary playmate.
- Shares and takes turns occasionally.
- Quarrels with other children.

### **Mental Development**

- Develops a somewhat stable concept of self.
- Speaks about 1,000 words.
- Starts to use pronouns in speech.
- Loves to hear stories over and over again.
- Enjoys learning short rhymes and songs.
- May match or identify primary colors.
- Enjoys imaginative and imitative play.
- Can take on some very simple responsibilities.
- Puts toys away with adult help.
- Has attention span of no more than a few minutes.
- Can make choices.

Each child is unique. It is difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain behaviors and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide range of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines show general progress through the developmental stages rather than fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to reach some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. If you have any concerns about your child's own pattern of development, check with your healthcare provider.

## **Sexual Abuse: Protect Your Child**

**Make sure you know what adults and older children are doing when they are with your child.**

Most sexual abusers are known to you and your child. They are most often family members, friends, and caretakers rather than "strangers." "Be cautious of adults who:

- Spend large amounts of time with children if it is not part of their job.
- Flirt with your child.
- Make your child uncomfortable or whom your child tries to avoid.
- Abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Physically abuse their wives.
- Have been convicted of a previous sexual offense.

**Support your child's right to say "no" to unwanted touching.**

- Let your child know that he can say "no" to touching by anyone, even a relative who hugs or kisses your child in a way the child does not like.

- Watch for bullying by an older child.
- Take your child's complaints seriously. Help come up with solutions.

### **Refuse to leave your child with adults you do not trust.**

Do not leave your child with these adults even if your lack of trust is "just a feeling." Sexual offenders often do not look or behave differently from no offenders.

### **Screen babysitters and day care providers.**

- If your sitter is an older child or young adult, talk with the sitter's parents to get a sense of how responsible he or she is. Ask for references.
- Let the sitter know that your child does not keep secrets from you.
- Talk with the sitter and your child when you return about how their time together went.

### **Screen day care centers and preschools.**

- Observe your child at the day-care center or preschool.
- Ask for references.
- Make sure that you can visit the center or preschool at any time without making an appointment.
- Talk with other parents whose children attend the center or preschool.
- Make sure you know about planned outings before they happen.

### **Talk to your child about sexual abuse.**

1. Use the right words. Make clear what you mean by words and phrases such as "hurt," "get into trouble," or "fool around." Teach your children the correct names for sexual body parts, such as the penis and vagina. If you use the term "private parts," make sure that both you and your child know what private parts are. It is not always easy for parents to discuss sexual issues with their children. It is very important to have these talks. It's a way for you to help protect your child.
2. Explain sexual abuse. Gear your explanation to your child's age. Begin by explaining unwanted, confusing, or secret touches. Tell the child to tell you if anyone asks them to do anything that makes them feel "funny," "yucky" or "icky" inside. For example, "Someone may try to touch your vagina when you do not want them to." Explain that it is their body and they have the right to say no, even if that person is an adult. Be specific. This will make it less frightening and confusing. For example, "Someone might try to put his hands down your pants or might keep rubbing up against you or might undress in front of you for no good reason." Reassure children that they can tell you if anything bad happens and that they won't get in trouble. Sexual abuse would NOT be their fault.
3. Talk about who. Explain that it may be someone your child already knows. Tell your child that even nice people can do bad things. Some people may not even realize that what they are doing is bad. Caution your child about a person who gives your child something in return for your child doing something. For example, "I'll let you watch TV if you undress for me and don't tell." Explain that it may be a person who threatens or

tries to scare your child. For example, "If you don't lie down with me, I'll hit your sister."  
"Answer your child's questions about puzzling adult behavior.

4. Talk about secrets. Let your child know he or she should not keep secrets from you. Explain the difference between a scary "secret" about something "bad," and a "surprise," which is usually "good."

Reference: RelayHealth and Bright Futures 2017

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