

Health and Wellness: 3 Years

Development

At this age, your child may:

- jump in place
- kick a ball
- balance and stand on one foot briefly
- pedal a tricycle
- change feet when going up stairs
- build a tower of nine cubes and make a bridge out of three cubes
- speak clearly, have a vocabulary of 1,000 to 2,000 words, speak sentences of four to six words and use pronouns and plurals correctly
- ask “how,” “what,” “why” and “when”
- like silly words and rhymes
- know his or her age, name and gender
- understand “cold,” “tired,” “hungry,” “on” and “under”
- tell the difference between “bigger” and “smaller” and explain how to use a ball, scissors, key and pencil
- copy a circle and imitate a drawing of a cross
- know names of colors
- describe action in picture books
- put on clothing and shoes
- feed himself or herself.

Feeding Tips

- Avoid junk foods and unhealthy snacks and soft drinks.
- Do not let your child run around while eating. Make him or her sit and eat. This will help prevent choking.
- You may need fluoride treatments if you have well water.
- Brush your child’s teeth one to two times each day with a soft-bristled toothbrush. You do not need to use toothpaste. If you do, use a very small amount. Let your child play with the toothbrush after brushing.

Your child’s growth:

Weight: ____ lbs. ____ oz. (____ percent)

Height: ____ in. (____ percent)

Blood pressure: _____ mm Hg

BMI: ____ percent

Sleep

- Your child may stop taking regular naps.
- Continue your regular nighttime routine.
- Your child may be afraid of the dark or monsters. This is normal. You may want to use a night light to help calm his or her fears.

Physical Activity

- Your child needs at least 60 minutes of active playtime most days of the week.
- Physical activity helps build strong bones and muscles, lowers your child’s risk of certain diseases (such as diabetes), increases flexibility, and increases self-esteem.
- Choose activities your child enjoys: dance, running, walking, swimming, skating, etc.
- Be sure to watch your child during any activity. Or better yet, join in!

Safety

- Use an approved car seat every time your child rides in the car. Your child should be in a car seat until he or she is ready to ride in a booster seat.
- Keep all knives, guns or other weapons out of your child’s reach. Store guns and ammunition in different parts of your house.
- Teach your child the dangers of running into the street. You will have to remind him or her often.



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- Teach your child to be careful around all dogs, especially when the dogs are eating.
- Always watch your child near water. “Knowing how to swim” does not make him or her safe in the water.
- Talk to your child about not talking to or following strangers. Also, talk about “good touch” and “bad touch.”

What Your Child Needs

- Your child may throw temper tantrums. Make sure he or she is safe and ignore the tantrums. If you give in, your child will throw more tantrums.
- Offer your child choices (such as clothes, stories or breakfast foods). This will encourage decision-making.
- Your child can understand the consequences of unacceptable behavior. Follow through with the consequences you talk about. This will help your child gain self-control.
- Let your child explore, show, initiate and communicate.
- If you do not use day care, consider enrolling your child in nursery school or play groups.
- You may be asked where babies come from and the differences between boys and girls. Answer these questions honestly and briefly. Use correct terms for body parts.
- By this age, 90 percent of children are bowel trained, 85 percent stay dry during the day and 60 to 70 percent stay dry at night. Praise and hug your child when he or she uses the potty chair. If he or she has an accident, offer gentle encouragement for next time. Teach your child good hygiene and how to wash his or her hands. Teach your girl to wipe from the front to the back.

Dental Care

- Teach your child how to brush his or her teeth. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush. You do not need to use toothpaste. Have your child brush his or her teeth every day, preferably before bedtime.
- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups. (Your child may need fluoride tablets if you have well water.)

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive this shot at this time:

- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information on giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) after your child’s immunizations.

Your Child’s Next Well Checkup

Your child’s next well checkup will be at age 4.

Your child may need shots for:

- DTaP, IPV (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis + inactivated poliovirus)
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- VAR (varicella)
- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information on giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before your child’s next immunizations.