

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 unhealthful 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.
- Your child needs at least 700 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day.
- Milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D.

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!
- You can find more information on health and wellness for children and teens at healthpoweredkids.org.

Sleep

- Your child may stop taking regular naps.
- Continue your regular nighttime routine.

(over)

- 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.

Safety

- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your child every time he or she rides in a vehicle. Your child must be in a car seat in the back seat until age 4.
- After age 4, your child must ride in a car seat or belt-positioning booster seat in the back seat until he or she is 4 feet 9 inches or taller.
- Be a good role model for your child. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Keep all knives, guns or other weapons out of your child's reach. Store guns and ammunition in different parts of your house.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your child's reach.
- Call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) or your health care provider for directions in case your child swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program them into your phone.
- Teach your child the dangers of running into the street. You will have to remind him or her often.
- 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."
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting your child to 1 hour or less of high-quality programs each day. Watch these programs with your child to help him or her better understand them.

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.
- **Never shake or hit your child.** If you think you are losing control, make sure your child is safe and take a 10-minute time out. If you are still not calm, call a friend, neighbor or relative to come over and help you. If you have no other options, call your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.
- Let your child explore, show, initiate and communicate.
- If you do not use daycare, consider enrolling your child in nursery school or play groups.
- Read to your child each day. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.
- 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 starting at age 3. (Your child may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)

Lab Work

Your child may need to have his or her lead levels checked.

- Lead – This is a blood test to look for high levels of lead in the blood. Lead is a metal that can get into a child's body from many things. Evidence shows that lead can be harmful to a child if the level is too high.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive this shot at this time:

- ☐ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your child's immunizations.

Your Child's Next Well Checkup

- Your child's next well checkup will be at age 4.
- Your child will need these shots between the ages of 4 to 6.
 - ☐ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
 - ☐ IPV (inactivated poliovirus vaccine)
 - ☐ MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
 - ☐ VAR (varicella)
 - ☐ influenza.

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