



Important Points for the 3 Year Visit

Nutrition:

Appetite is perhaps a shade better than it was a few months ago, but it is still not what most parents (or grandparents) think it should be. "My child will not eat," is a familiar complaint heard at the 3 year checkup. Remember, feeding problems may arise if parents make their child eat more than the child needs to, or shows too much concern in what the youngster eats. The 3-year-old should pretty much be able to feed him or herself. During mealtime, the 3-year-old is sometimes very demanding of parent's attention and may also dawdle! Avoid nuts, hard candy, uncut grapes, hot dogs or raw vegetables. Control sweets and avoid junk food. Eat dinner together as a family whenever possible. Begin to teach proper table manners and encourage conversation during family meals. Turn the TV off during meals. Continue to give your child a multivitamin with iron each day.

Development:

Jumps in place, kicks ball, pedals tricycle, walks up stairs with alternating gait, scribbles, copies a circle, uses utensils, puts on some clothing, can stack at least 8 blocks, participates in pretend play, knows name, age and sex, speech is at least 75% intelligible; talks in short sentences but may leave out articles, plural markings, or tense markings; asks questions such as "what's that?" and "why?" understands prepositions and some adjectives, enjoys interactive play, may be oppositional or destructive, listens to short stories, undresses, some dressing, progress toward toilet training, feeds himself, knows one color, may be able to ride a tricycle (helmet!!!).

Oral Health:

It is time to take your child for his first dentist visit. Supervise brushing twice per day with a pea size amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Discourage swallowing any toothpaste.

Touchpoints:

Your child is entering the cognitive world of magical thinking; dreams become real to the 3 year old as she is beginning to be aware of aggressive feelings. Occasional bad dreams are normal and are usually related to monsters or the dark. Reassure your child. Talk about the dreams during the day and do not expose him to violent or frightening movies or TV. Night terrors may occur for the 3 year old where she is frightened but cannot be awakened or comforted, and may scream or talk wildly. Speak calmly and reassure her that she is safe and protect her from injury. These episodes usually last 10-30 minutes. Your child cannot remember it the next day.

This is also the time when you child's imagination begins to take fire! She will assimilate new learning through imaginative play. Children often develop imaginary friends at this age for which to act out all of her imagined experiences. Adults must respect the private nature of such a fantasy and appreciate its productive qualities: a sense of humor is likely to surface as well as a child's ability to show empathy for others. Do not worry if your child becomes curious about body parts; this is normal at this age. Always use the correct terms for genitals.

Safety:

- Continue to use a toddler car seat and make sure it is properly secured in the back seat.
- There is no such thing as a childproof cap. Poisons, medications and toxic household products should be kept in a locked cabinet. Childproof your doors; your child can open them.
- Begin to teach your child his or her full name, address and phone number.
- If guns are in your house, lock the guns and ammunition separately, and hide the keys where your child cannot reach them. Kids need to understand that guns are not toys and learn how to behave around them.
- Enroll in swim lessons and remember that knowing how to "swim" does not make your child water-safe at this age. All pools must be gated. Never leave your child unattended in a bathtub—ever.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check that they work properly every month. Keep your 3 year old's environment free of smoke: no smoking in the home or car.
- Keep your toddler away from moving machinery, lawn mowers, overhead garage doors, driveways and streets. ALWAYS supervise when your child is playing near a street.

What to expect during this visit:

- You will complete a developmental assessment for your 3 year old.
- We will discuss your child's growth and development and any other concerns that you may have. Please prepare and bring in questions for your next visit at 4 years. Your child will be receiving his booster immunizations at 4 years: MMR, DTap, IPV and Varivax.