

# 3 year old check-up



Patient and Family Education

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**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

## TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHILD

### PARENTING

- Your child wants and needs your love and your praise. Spend time with your child. Hug him, and tell him that you love him often. Tell him when he does something that pleases you. Thank him when he does something nice.
- Your child may want to help around the house. Give him small jobs, such as picking up his toys.
- Be patient with your child's constant questions. He is very curious and often asks, "Why?" Give him simple answers.
- Read to your child every day. Let him choose the stories. Visit a nearby library often.
- Take time out for yourself. Ask someone you trust to watch your child while you do something alone, with your spouse or with a friend.
- Be sure to check out the background of caregivers you do not know.
- If your child does not behave, be calm but firm. Set a good example of how you want him to behave.
  - If he refuses to listen to you, place him in "time out" for up to 3 minutes. Have him sit by himself in a safe place.
  - If he is hurting something or someone with a toy, take the toy away.
  - Be consistent. Only make rules that you can carry out. If you say you are going to do something, do it.

### DEVELOPMENT

- Your child may be learning colors and shapes now. Talk about the colors and shapes of objects in your home or when you go for a walk.
- Your child is learning to put sentences together. Have him talk with you about what he sees and does.
- Your child may begin asking questions about body parts. Give him simple and honest answers.
- Your child can dress himself now. He may often put clothes on backwards or upside down. Allow him to wear it this way around the house. When possible, give him a choice of 2 or 3 items that are OK with you.
- Watch TV with your child and ask him questions about what he sees. Choose shows without violence or sex. Do not allow a TV set in his bedroom.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

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### SAFETY

- Home
  - Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Change the batteries twice a year. Have a fire escape plan for your family, and practice it often.
  - Keep hot items and sharp objects out of reach.
  - Use back burners of the stove for cooking. Place pot handles towards the rear.
  - Do not let your child play near the stove or next to you when you are cooking.
  - Keep him away from the fireplace and other hot items.
  - Secure windows and screens. On upper floors, install safety bars that can keep your child from falling out the window but can be removed in case of a fire.
  - Keep cleaning items and medicines locked up and out of reach. Always keep them in their original container.
  - Lock up guns and bullets.
  - Store knives, scissors, razors and other sharp items in a safe place.
- Car
  - Make sure your child rides in a car safety seat every time you go driving, no matter how short the trip.
  - A seat with a harness is safer than a booster seat. Keep your child in a harness as long as possible.
  - Keep the car seat in the backseat. Make sure the seat is the correct size for your child's height and weight.
  - Follow both the car owner's manual and the child safety seat directions for how to use your seat correctly.
  - Do not add anything, such as blankets or harness strap covers, to your child or the seat unless it is approved by the car seat maker.
  - Set a good example for your child. Wear your seatbelt, too.
- Smoking
  - Keep your child away from cigarette smoke. Breathing in second-hand smoke can cause asthma, ear infections and other breathing problems.
  - Do not smoke at home or in the car.
  - Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Body safety
  - Teach your child:
    - No one should touch his private parts (parts covered by a bathing suit) except to keep him healthy, such as a doctor or nurse during a check-up.
    - Tell a trusted adult if something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable or unhappy.
    - Never keep secrets from you unless it is a good surprise, such as a birthday present.
- Animals
  - Teach your child:
    - Ask an adult before petting a strange animal.
    - Do not tease animals or take their food away.
    - Do not put his face near an animal's mouth.
- Play
  - Spend time playing with your child. Teach him how to share and take turns.
  - Help your child use his imagination. Buy toys that help him pretend, think and learn.
  - Make sure that your child's play area is safe. Do not allow him to play near or in the street.
  - Watch him carefully when he uses riding toys or climbs in the playground.

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- Teach him how to use playground equipment safely.
- Have your child wear a bike helmet anytime he rides a tricycle or bike with training wheels. He also needs a helmet if he rides on a bike with you.
- Hold his hand to cross the street, and teach him how to cross safely.
- Outdoors
  - Use a sunscreen and insect repellent that is safe for children. Use it each time he plays or swims outdoors during the day.
  - Make sure he wears shoes, even in the grass.
  - Watch him carefully when he uses riding toys or climbs in the playground.
  - Teach him how to use playground equipment safely.
  - Make sure he wears a bike helmet if he rides a tricycle or on a bike carrier with you.
  - Make sure he cannot get near pools or spas by himself. If you have one in your yard, install a proper safety fence around it.
  - Begin teaching your child how to swim and be safe in the water. Never leave your child alone in the water. “Swimmies” should not be used as a life vest.
  - Hold his hand to cross the street. Teach him how to cross safely.

### **A FEW NEVER, EVER’S –**

To help keep your child safe - **NEVER**:

- Leave your child alone. Three year olds need constant watching.
- Leave your child alone in a car.
- Hold your child in your lap while riding in the car.
- Allow your child to wear necklaces, straps or backpacks on the playground or during sleep. These items can cause choking.

### **TOILET TRAINING**

- Your child can tell you when he needs to go to the bathroom now. Praise your child each time he uses the potty.
- Most 3 year olds can use the potty for urine and bowel movements during the day. Nighttime control may take longer – do not punish him for accidents.

### **FEEDING**

- Eat meals as a family. Turn off the TV and cell phones.
- Share news of the day, and talk together. Keep mealtime pleasant. Focus on family news and not on what or how much your child is eating.
- Stick to scheduled meal times and 1 to 2 snacks.
- Your child’s doctor may also advise that you give him a multivitamin each day.

### **Meals**

- Your child needs food from all food groups:
  - Lean meat, eggs, beans and cheese for protein
  - Fruits and vegetables for fiber, vitamins and minerals
  - Whole grains, such as cereal, pasta and whole grain bread for fiber, vitamins and minerals. At least half of the grains he eats should be whole grains.
  - Dairy foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt for calcium.

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- Fill half your child's plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Allow your child to choose how much to eat, and do not scold or nag him about what he is eating or not eating.
- Your child may eat less now. He knows how much he needs to keep him from being hungry.
- Limit fast food meals and snacks. These foods have a lot of fat, sugar, salt and calories but little nutrition.
- **Snacks** Serve healthy snacks, such as low-fat yogurt, cheese and soft fruits.
- Avoid foods and drinks with lots of sugar, such as desserts, sweetened cereals, candy, sweet tea and sodas. Candy and sticky, sweet foods can cause tooth decay.

### Drinks

- Give your child low-fat or skim milk.
- You may also give him low-fat flavored milk, such as chocolate.

### SLEEP

- Have a regular bedtime and routine for your child.
- Read to your child each night before he goes to sleep.
- Three year olds usually sleep 10 to 12 hours at night and may not need a nap any more.

### HEALTHY HABITS

You can help keep your child and your family healthy when you:

- Wash your hands often during the day. Teach your child and other family members to wash their hands often, too. Use warm water and soap and scrub for 20 seconds.
- Teach your child how to wash his face and hands.
- Teach him how to brush his teeth using a soft toothbrush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- Take your child to the dentist for regular check-ups.
- Make sure your child gets needed vaccines to help prevent disease.

Your child learns through play. Limit screen time to 1 or 2 hours a day. Some examples of screen time are:

- TV
- Computers
- Videogames
- Tablet devices
- Smart phones
- Avoid giving fruit punch and 100% fruit juice to your child. It often has extra sugar he does not need. Try giving him small pieces of whole fruit instead. If you do give him juice, only give your child 4 to 6 ounces a day. Dilute it so it is 1/2 water and 1/2 juice.
- Also avoid giving soda, sports drinks, energy drinks and sweet tea to your child. Give water or diluted juice instead.
- Whether inside or outside, give your child the chance to be active every day. Active play is good for all children. Your child should have 1 hour or more of physical activity daily.

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## **3 year old check-up, continued**

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For more information and tips on living a healthy lifestyle, you may go to [www.strong4life.com](http://www.strong4life.com).

### **FOR YOUR CHILD'S NEXT VISIT - 4 years old**

- You and your child's doctor can talk about how things are going with your child.
- Your child will have a physical examination (check-up) that may include getting vaccines. You will have a chance to ask questions.
- You may want to talk about your child's:
  - Eating and sleeping
  - Safety
  - Development
  - Behavior, time-out and discipline
  - Learning and social skills

### **THINGS FOR YOU TO DO**

- Keep a record of when your child is ill or hurt. Share this record with your child's doctors.
- Make a list of questions to talk with your doctor about at the next visit.
- Bring your child's shot (vaccine) record to your next visit.

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