

Great Destinations Pediatrics



AGE: 3 YEARS

GROWTH

Weight: lbs oz (%)
Height: inches (%)

EATING

Toddlers should eat 3 meals a day. They should feed themselves with utensils and drink only from a cup. They should drink a maximum of 2 to 3 cups of skim milk and the rest of the day water only. Drinking water is important to avoid dehydration. Avoid any, soda pop, Gatorade, juice and sugary drinks. Avoid artificial sweeteners. Be careful with foods that your toddler might choke on, such as hard candy, popcorn, nuts, grapes, and hotdogs. Do not allow your child to play or run with a mouthful of food. Help your child brush their teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day. Your child should see a dentist for check-ups and routine cleanings every 6 months. Offer your child a balanced diet, including fruits, vegetables, breads, whole grains, dairy products, and meat. Limit fat and sugar. "Pickiness" is very common throughout the toddler years. Serve your child the same foods that the family is eating to avoid becoming a short-order cook. Offer a variety of foods and encourage your child to try new foods.

DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers this age can pedal a tricycle, go up and down stairs with alternating steps, balance on one foot, copy a circle and a cross, and put on some clothes. They know their name, age and sex. They speak in short sentences and often ask "what's that" and "why." Approximately 75% of a 3 year olds speech should be understood by strangers. Many 3 year-olds are potty trained, but it is normal for them to still wet the bed at night. Toddlers should have a regular bedtime with a routine. They should fall asleep on their own and remain in bed. Books are an important part of a bedtime routine and promote language development.

PLAY AND LEARN

Toddlers this age continue to assert their independence and throw "temper tantrums." Offer choices, all of which are acceptable to the parent, whenever possible. If your child has a tantrum with kicking and screaming, make sure they are in a place where they cannot hurt themselves and ignore the tantrum. Never give in to your toddler's tantrum. Use "time-out" for undesirable behaviors such as kicking, hitting, and biting; use 1 minute for each year of age. Undesirable behaviors can be punished with loss of privileges. Be sure to praise desirable behaviors 20-30 times a day by hugging, patting, or telling your child, "good job." Imaginary friends are common at this age. Children enjoy active play with blocks, puzzles, and pegs and often use household objects to engage in pretend play. They enjoy listening to short stories. Allow your toddler to play with other children to learn to share and take turns with peers.

SCREEN TIME

Your child should only have 1-2 hours per day of TV or media time including computers, video games, tablet and phone time.

SAFETY

1. Climbing-If your toddler can climb on it, bolt it to the wall.
2. Car Seats-Continue to use a car seat in the back seat.
3. Water Safety-Keep your pool surrounded by a fence with a locking gate. Knowing how to swim does not ensure your child's safety. Never leave your toddler alone in the bath tub. Keep bathroom doors closed. Never leave cleaning buckets or play pool filled with water. Make it a rule to watch the water drain out the tub and to empty play pools immediately after use.
4. Poisons-Keep all medications and cleaners out of reach.
5. Guns-Store guns and ammunition separately. Keep guns out of reach and locked away.
6. Burns-Keep matches, lighters, and cigarettes out of reach. Use smoke alarms. Do not allow your child to play around hot liquids. Use back burners on stove and keep handles turned in.
7. Stairs and Windows-Use secure gates in front of stairs. Make sure your toddler cannot push on windows and fall out.
8. Cords and Outlets-Keep all outlets covered and cords up.
9. Dog Bites-Watch your toddler around animals, especially dogs. Never leave your child alone with a dog. Most bites are caused by the family dog.
10. Streets-Teach your child to be careful near streets, though they may not remember such instructions. Always supervise your child.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Your child's next appointment is at 4 years of age for a well check and immunizations.

