Well-Child Checkup: 3 Years

CHILD'S NAME	DOB	DATE OF VISIT	NEXT VISIT	LENGTH	PERCENTILE	WEIGHT	PERCENTILE

Reaching Milestones & Activities

Your 3-year-old can be very engaging. Social, language and motor skills are developing quickly during this age.

At 3 years old, your child may start to:

- Talk well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Follow instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Show affection for friends without prompting
- Get upset with major changes in routine
- Walk up and down stairs, one foot on each step
- Climb well

Speech

At this age, encourage your child to talk to you. It is important to spend lots of time playing with, reading to and talking with your toddler. This can help your child practice his or her communication skills with you. You may notice your child using 3- to 4-word sentences more regularly with his or her vocabulary increasing to several hundred words.

In some cases, your child will need more help from a trained professional, like a speech and language therapist, to learn to communicate. Talk to your child's health care provider if you have questions.

Toilet Training Takes Time

Successful toilet training is based upon physical, developmental and behavioral milestones, not age. Some children are ready to toilet train at 18 months and others at 3 years old. Plan toilet training when you can dedicate the time and energy to be consistent on a daily basis. Your readiness is equally important too.

- Remember, there's no rush. If you start too early, it might take longer to train your child. Let your child's motivation lead the process.

Toilet Training Support is Available!

Avera has a team of family life experts who can provide additional support throughout your parenting journey that includes toilet training. Call 605-322-3660 or email at familylifeeducators@avera.org

Keeping Track - Immunizations

It's important for you to save and keep your child's vaccine records up-to-date. This will help you be prepared when the time is ready when you register your child for school.

You can keep track of your child's records by:
Getting a vaccination tracking card from your child's health care provider (or visit Avera.org/shots to download a free tracking card).

Nutrition

Help your child develop a healthy attitude toward eating at an early age. By age 3, your child may be less likely to use eating (or not eating) to be rebellious. If your child sees his or her parents model good eating habits, your child will learn to better interact, participate, and enjoy family meals. Sit down together as a family as often as possible.

Other Helpful Tips

- Encourage your child to drink water between meals.
- Switch from whole milk to low-fat or nonfat milk. Ask your health care provider which is best for your child. Aim for 2 to 3 cups per day. Do not give more than 24 ounces of milk per day. Cheese and yogurt are good dairy sources.
- Limit juice to no more than 4 ounces (1/2 cup) per day. Make sure the label says 100% juice and serve it in a cup, not a bottle. Even 100% juice is high in sugar and too much can ruin a child's appetite for other healthy foods. Avoid soda or other sweet drinks.

Choking Prevention

Your child is still learning to chew and swallow food properly. Your child may even gulp food down fast to get on with playing. For that reason, the risk of choking is high.

Always watch your child when he or she is eating. Avoid foods that he or she is most likely to choke on: marshmallows, popcorn, nuts, raisins, hard candy and string cheese. Cut these foods into small pieces: hot dogs, grapes, raw fruits and vegetables and meat. Don't let your child walk around with food. This is a choking risk.

- **Tip:** Learn and stay up to date on your CPR skills. Parents can take CPR classes to be prepared for emergency situations.

Picky Eater?
Your child may have strong opinions on what he or she wants to eat.

- For example, your child may love a particular food one day, and then push away the same food the next day. You may even notice your child will request and eat a certain food for several days in a row, and then say he or she doesn't like it anymore. This is typical at this age. It is best not to make an issue of it. Continue to expose and offer your child to a variety of healthy foods to choose from. Let your child pick and how much he or she will eat.

Your child may need to taste a new food 10 or more times before accepting it!

Sleep

At this age, children should sleep anywhere between 10 to13 hours (including naps) a day.

Help Your Child Learn and Grow!

Positive Discipline Strategies for Tantrums
Tantrums are normal at this age. Toddlers use tantrums to try to get things they want or need. Tantrums tend to get better after the age of 3. Your toddler is starting to learn what's allowed and what isn't. He or she may test some rules to see how you react. Use positive discipline to teach children to manage their behavior and keep them safe:

- **Give your attention and show that you care.** Pay attention to and praise behaviors you like and ignore those you want to discourage. Redirect to a different activity when needed. Stay consistent when enforcing limits and rules. Try short timeouts if needed.
- **Do your best to stay calm.** Stand back and wait for tantrums to end on their own, then comfort your child. Ask friends and family for help.
- **Model good behavior.** Your child looks up to you. Teach your toddler not to hit, to bite or to use physical force against others. Model positive behaviors you would like to see in your children.

***Remember: spanking and harsh words are harmful and do not work.**

Praise your child when he or she learns a new task.

- Teach your child independence and self-help skills, such as teeth brushing, eating and dressing/ undressing.
- Work with your child to solve the problem when he or she is upset.
- Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, "Go to your room and get your shoes and coat."

The toddler years can be challenging! Don't be afraid to talk to your child's health care provider with any questions. Your child's health care provider can help explain their development and ways to effectively guide your child's behavior.

Caring for You and Your Family

This age can be hard on parents, especially if your child is strong-willed. It is normal to feel frustrated at times. Take time out for yourself and share your feelings with friends or other parents.

- Plan family time together. This can be as simple as a walk to the park. You don't have to spend money on special classes or programs. What your child wants and needs is fun time with you. Be sure to give your child your undivided attention without competition from electronic screens.
- Parents should continue to nurture their relationship with each other. A weekly date night is a great idea, even if it is simply having dinner together after your child is asleep.

Screen Time and Technology Use: 0 – 60 Minutes a Day

You may let your child use digital media at this age, but choose high-quality programming and/or apps that encourage play between you and your child. Toddlers learn best when you are involved with their learning. If you choose to let them watch something on a screen, be sure to watch high-quality educational programs with them – do not leave them alone in front of a screen. Help them understand what they are seeing and limit exposure to less than 1 hour per day.

- Avoid fast-paced programs and apps with lots of distracting content, advertisements and violence.
- Toddlers don't yet understand advertisements or animations, and may not understand the difference between real-world people and fictional cartoons.
- Avoid using screens as a babysitter, as a reward, or to stop tantrums.

Safety Tips and Helpful Reminders

Car Seats
Always make sure to refer to your car seat manual to make sure your seat is the right size for your child's height and weight. These recommendations are not universal for all car seats. If your child no longer fits in a rear-facing car seat, you should use a forward-facing seat with a harness. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat.

Safety Outside the Home

It's impossible to childproof everything, especially the outside world. Here are some helpful tips and reminders to keep your child safe.

- If you take your child to a playground, do a quick scan of the area to make sure all equipment is safe to use. Peek into slides and tunnels, and inspect the grounds for broken glass, rusty or sharp surfaces, or anything else that could cause an injury. Playgrounds are one of the most common places for fall-related injuries with children.
- If you're pushing your child in a stroller, use the elevator rather than escalators if available. Strollers can tip and flip on escalators since the steps are narrow.
- Make sure your child is properly strapped into shopping carts and strollers if a belt is available.

The Importance of Water Safety

Drowning is the leading preventable death for children ages 1 through 4. Never leave your child alone in water. All kids should learn how to swim.

Poison Prevention

Active, curious toddlers can be at risk for poisoning. Keep all cleaners, medicines, toiletries and chemicals out of reach in a locked cabinet. Have the poison control number (1-800-222-1222) readily available or program it into your phones.

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