

A Newsletter for Parents

3 Year Check Up

Well Child Appointments can be made online at AustinRegionalClinic.com.



NUTRITION

Growing independence is a hallmark of this stage in your child's life. It is easy to believe that your child can make good food and activity decisions independently. However, you still need to guide your child's nutrition and play, providing food and activity choices for your child within the boundaries that you set.

It is important for you to set the initial boundaries, such as what kinds of food will be in the house; when meal and snack times are; how much media time the family will have; and what kind of activities are available to the child.

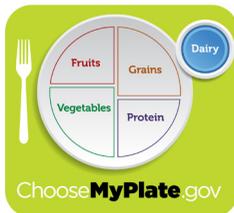
Within these boundaries parents should provide the child with choices, such as a variety of healthy snacks and options for what they will do during outside play. This not only prevents every decision from becoming a battle, but also encourages healthy decision making and avoids over-restriction.

Busy families frequently eat out, often leaving the decision about what to eat up to the preschool child. **It is important to limit eating out but to maintain control of your child's food choices here as well.**

Meals and Snacks

Utilize the MyPlate visual diagram to include all 5 food groups in meals and snacks. For the 3 meals of the day make half of their plate fruits and vegetables. Remember: it can take up to 12-15 times of presenting a vegetable before a child will eat it. Never force a child to eat a vegetable—this will just create a battle and control issue-- and do not reward a child eating their vegetables with dessert. For more information and tips please visit ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Picky eating, food refusal, and food jags—liking something one day and not the next—are normal parts of your child's development. As parents we need



to avoid falling into a pattern of offering only what the child "likes" or offering less nutritious foods because your child refuses the healthy foods offered to them. Remember that excess portion sizes, and extra treats and snacks can add up to weight gain over time—as little as 150 kcal extra intake per day (such as an extra bowl of cereal before bed) can become a 15-lb (6.8-kg) weight gain over the next year.

Good nutrition is a family affair. Eating together promotes healthy nutritious habits, so sit down for family meals daily. Parents are the most important role model for their children. Look down at your own plate and see what types of food you're modeling for your child to eat.

Healthy Habits Tips

Remember the message "7-5-1-1-0" for what healthy habits are important for your child.

7: Eat breakfast 7 days a week. Eating breakfast prevents children from getting too hungry and overeating later in the day-- habits that lead to excess weight. If serving cereal, provide a breakfast cereal with at least 2 grams of fiber and less than 9 grams of sugar per serving.

5: Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Involve your preschooler in food preparation that is appropriate for their age.

1: Do not let your child spend more than 1 hour on total screen time (TV, video games, recreational computer time, iPad, iPhones). While there are many educational games and entertaining kid apps available, spending too much time watching screens can cause health problems for your toddler. Just like with many things, parents need to set limits for their toddler around screen-time to keep them safe. Choose media (apps, games, videos) that are interactive, non-violent, and educational. Sit next to your child and discuss what they are seeing and doing when they are using screens. Toddlers copy what they see, so make sure that your media choices show people being treated just as you'd like your toddler to treat others. Watching too much

screen time can lead to less sleep and less restful sleep, less physical activity, more trouble with learning social interactions, and more exposure to advertisers that promote unhealthy foods.

To keep your child healthy, turn off all electronics during meals and keep the tablets and TVs out of your child's bedroom. If there already is a "screen" in their bedroom, remove it. These steps will not only decrease screen time, but also help increase parent-child communication, and decrease sleep problems.

1: Have your child participate in at least 1 hour of physical activity per day. Playing outside at this age usually results in more physical activity than indoor play. Plan for unstructured, outdoor play time every day.

0: Encourage your child to drink almost no sugar sweetened beverages. Water and low-fat (1%) or nonfat (skim) milk are the best drinks for you to drink. Remember 2% milk is not considered low-fat. Whole milk and flavored milk add calories from fat and sugar that most children this age do not need.

Many parents assume that child care, preschool, and other caregivers, including family members are providing good nutrition and activity options for their child. It is important for families to ask about these options and provide healthy alternatives if needed.

For more information on how to encourage healthy habits for children 0-5 years of age, please visit:

www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy

Is My Child Overweight/ Obese?

Contrary to the belief that young children will "grow out of it," excess weight persists into later life and increases the risk for weight-related diseases in both childhood and adulthood.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is widely used to help define overweight and obese children. BMI compares height and weight and varies by age and sex. A BMI between

the 85th and 95th percentile is defined as overweight, and a BMI above the 95% is defined as obese. BMI and BMI % will be shared at your child's visit. Do not hesitate to ask your child's doctor about any concerns you have about your child's weight or eating habits.

SLEEP

Your toddler still needs quite a bit of night sleep as well as a nap in the daytime. Children this age are typically sleeping 10-13 hours of out their 24 hour day. When your child doesn't get enough sleep, they will be more grumpy and less likely to follow instructions.

Toddlers thrive when there is a routine, meaning the same pattern of things happen every night before sleep. Your toddler no longer needs milk to be part of this nightly pattern. A great routine is Brush, Book and Bed. When you brush teeth, read a book, and then tuck into bed every night, your toddler will become calm as they recognize the pattern. This is especially true if you tuck them into bed at the same time every night, weekends included.

Most children at 3 years old are still napping. However, if your child stops sleeping in the daytime, then make sure to put them to bed earlier. They should still get the same total hours of sleep every 24 hours when they stop napping.



DEVELOPMENT

Social/Emotional

A three year old's world is full of fantasy and imagination. This is a magic time for children and for everyone around them. Your three year old's vivid fantasy life helps them explore a wide range of emotions, from love and dependency to anger, protest and fear. Your child will take on several identities and may give living qualities and emotions to objects in their life.

At three your child will be less selfish than they were at age two. They will be less dependent on you and more secure. You might see your child now playing with other children, interacting instead of just playing

side by side. Likely you are seeing your child developing friendships, too.

A three year old is learning to become more aware of and sensitive to the feelings of others. This leads to more cooperation with both adults and other children. Play sessions should be calmer, and with less aggressive behavior. At times you will need to encourage cooperation. For instance, you might suggest to "use your words" as you see disagreements arise between children. You may need to remind children, who are sharing a toy, that each will have a turn. As your child approaches four years, they should be able to learn to take turns and to share in a small group. Also they should be able to learn to ask politely much of the time, rather than grabbing, whining, or screaming for something.

Tips:

- **Praise your child** for behaviors you want to see, such as trying a new task, sharing with a friend or being cooperative.
- **Encourage and reward self-help skills.** Encourage your child to use a fork and spoon at meals. Teach your child to use a washcloth or sponge to bathe.
- **Show your child, by your own example, how to peacefully deal with conflicts.** If you have a bad temper, try to tone down your reactions in your child's presence. Otherwise, they will mimic your behavior.

Cognitive/Learning

Your three year old may spend much of their day questioning everything. "Why?" is likely a favorite question. Take these questions seriously but don't feel obligated to give detailed explanations, especially to questions that have no real answers. Answers like: "because it is good for you" or "I don't know; let's find a book about the sun to read and see" are fine. A three year old's reasoning skills are still very limited.

Around age three your child will begin to develop a sense of time. They will know their daily routine and try to figure routines of other people. There are other milestones you might see. Many children in their 3rd year are able to name some colors. They are often learning to count objects up to 3.

Language/Speech Development

Most three year olds talk constantly. This may disturb parents at times, but by three years of age your child should have a vocabulary of 300-1000 words and be able to speak in sentences of five or six words. A stranger should be able to understand at least 75% of what your three year old says. Your child is



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learning new words and is gaining experience in using them and thinking with them.

Tips to help Language and Speech Development:

- Read to your three year old at least 20 minutes a day. You might let your child tell part of the story back to you. Or ask your child questions about the story or the pictures. (How many? What color?)
- Sing songs and recite rhymes with your child.
- Introduce ABC's by drawing large capital letters and singing the alphabet song.

Speech Sounds

- By age three years most children are able to make the following sounds: b, p, m, h, d, g, k and vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u).
- Between three and four the following sounds should develop: y, t, k, w.
- The following sounds may not develop more fully until after four years of age: l, f, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, th.

Stuttering

Children between the ages of two and five often have periods of stuttering. Stuttering refers to difficulty in speaking that involves repeating syllables (li-li-like this), words, or using fillers such as "uh-uh-uh." Stuttering tends to last a month or two but may come and go. Try not to correct your child's bumpy speech. If the syllable repetition is severe (li-li-li-li-like this), your child's facial muscles look tense, or your child experiences a "block" (no voice or airflow for several seconds), then your child may be having a significant problem with stuttering. Truly significant stuttering is not common at this age but can occur. Discuss your concerns with your child's provider.

Big Body Movement Skills

Your preschooler may seem to be in constant motion. This is because they are using their body to convey thoughts

and emotions. Their minds and bodies are very connected. Moving the body helps them understand and explore new words and concepts. For example, if you start talking about an airplane, your child may spread their wings and “fly” about the room.

Movement milestones between three and four years:

- Goes up and down stairs without support.
- Kicks ball forward.
- Catches large bounced ball most of time.

Hand and Finger Skills

Three year olds are developing both the muscle control and the concentration needed to master more precise hand and finger movements. They should be able to hold a crayon more like an adult, with a thumb on one side of the crayon and the fingers on the other.

DISCIPLINE

A three year old is now capable of learning the basic rules of what is allowed and what is not allowed at home and in public. Parents have the right and responsibility to take charge and make rules for their child. Learning to follow rules and obey directions will help keep your child safe and will help your child become a pleasant, helpful and loving person. Telling your child “no” firmly and using “time-out” are most effective forms of discipline without anger. We do not recommend corporal punishment (spanking).

Make sure that your child understands the difference between important rules, that are not open to negotiation, and areas in which your child can have choices. Important rules include staying in the car seat, not hitting other children, getting ready to leave on time in the morning and going to bed at night without problems. Try to keep important rules to no more than about 10 or 12 items and be prepared to stick to them. Examples of appropriate child decisions include things such as which fruit to eat, books to read and toys to take in the tub. All three year olds cry, whine and throw tantrums. If your child is crying because of pain, hunger or fear, respond immediately to this need. Make sure that your child receives sufficient sleep. Tired children are often irritable and poorly behaved. When your child is misbehaving because they want something that is not allowed, ignore this behavior or use “time-out”. When your child shows good behavior, provide extra cuddling and enjoyable activities. Giving your child more attention for good behavior, will help them to behave better and have fewer tantrums.

POTTY TRAINING

1. Finding the right time is key. Wait until they are interested in being in “big kid” underwear or they are concerned about being in that wet or dirty diaper. It is not recommended that you pick a toilet training time during other stressful events in your child’s life. These include changes in childcare arrangements or changes to their household. If your family is preparing to move, is having a new baby or going through a significant illness, this is not the time to start potty training. Wait a few months.
2. Be patient! The right time is different for every child. Some kids may get it right immediately but others may take longer. Try your best not to compare children. Typically daytime potty training happens between 2 ½ -4 years of age. Nighttime training takes longer and more than 50% of 4 year olds are still needing a nighttime diaper or pullup.
3. Some families use a reward system. If you do, then make sure to choose the reward that interests your child. Initially you are likely going to reward every success. But then you will need to change your goal, rewarding a full day of dry underwear.
4. Toddlers are excited to use their growing control over their life. However, when we as parents show our children that we are very, very excited for them to potty train, this strong desire that we have as parents can backfire. Some toddlers see how much we care about potty training and then refuse to use the potty. If you see this happen, then dial back your emotions you show your child about potty training. Cut out your discussions about potty training for a month or two. Then when you restart, talk about successes and failures in the same tone of voice. Talk to your doctor if you are still running into problems.

DENTAL CARE

The following strategies can help prevent tooth problems:

- Brush your child’s teeth with a soft nylon toothbrush twice a day using a small amount (pea-sized) of a fluoride-containing toothpaste. Teach them to spit out the toothpaste after brushing.
- Limit fruit juice and other sugary beverages. Our dentist colleagues advise drinking milk or any juice only during meals and offer only water between meals because frequent exposure to sweets increases cavities.

- Make sure to brush right after eating sticky-sugary foods. These include raisins, sticky candies or gums, dried fruit, gummi “fruit snacks” or gummi vitamins.
- Drink fluoride-supplemented water.
- For patients insured by Medicaid, you can find a dental provider for your child www.tmhp.com, or calling the THSteps Hotline at 877-847-8377.

SAFETY

Injuries are the leading cause of death in children younger than 4 years of age. Most of these injuries can be prevented.

Car Safety

Car accidents are the greatest danger to your child’s life and health. To prevent these injuries, correctly USE a car safety seat EVERY TIME your child is in the car.



They should stay in a 5-point-harness car seat until they outgrow it (usually well past 4 years old). The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.

Do you have questions about how to put your car seat in the car? Call 1-866-732-8243 or look at seatcheck.org (click Car Seat and then Get Your Seat Inspected) to find a certified technician who will check it for free.

Do not allow your child to play in the street or driveways. Walk behind your car before you backup your car to be sure no one is behind you. You cannot always see your child through the rear view mirror. We do recommend cars with backup cameras for families with children.

Prevent Choking

Many food related choking deaths can be prevented by making sure food is always cut into small pieces and having your child eat while sitting down. Beware of round objects such as peppermint candies, whole grapes and hot dogs. Cut grapes and hot dogs length-wise to prevent this.

Prevent Falls and Injuries

Your child will find an endless variety of dangerous situations at home and elsewhere.

Your child can fall off play equipment. Make sure the surface under play equipment is soft enough to absorb a fall. Use safety-tested mats or loose-fill materials, like shredded rubber, sand, wood chips, or bark,

maintained to a depth of at least 9 inches and extending at least 6 feet (more for swings and slides) from play equipment.

Avoid the recreational use of trampolines at home. All children, especially those 5 years or younger, are at risk of serious trampoline-related injuries.

- Install window locks on all windows on the 2nd floor and higher.
- Place gates on the top and bottom of stairways.
- Remove or cushion any sharp edged furniture in case your child falls against it.
- Strap your toddler in properly at all times when in a stroller or shopping cart.

To help keep kids safe from furniture and TV tip-overs: Secure all dressers, bookcases, entertainment units, TV stands and TVs into the wall's studs. Do not place televisions on top of furniture that is not designed for TVs, such as on dressers, as they can tip over more easily.

Prevent Drownings

Keep your child within an arm's reach around water. Never leave your child alone in or near a bathtub, pail of water, wading or swimming pool, or any other water—even for a moment. During swimming parties with toddlers, make sure that one adult is designated as watcher of the pool. Toddlers fall in easily and a child can drown even though no one hears anything out of the ordinary.

Use Coast-Guard approved life jackets if your child is boating or near waterways.

If you have a swimming pool, fence it on all sides with a fence at least 4 feet high, and be sure the gates are self-latching. Most children drown when they wander out of the house and fall into a pool that is not fenced off from the house.

Prevent Burns

Keep your child out of the kitchen while you are cooking. If your child is under foot, hot liquids, grease and hot foods can spill on him or her and cause serious burns. Remember that kitchen appliances and other hot surfaces such as ovens, wall heaters, irons and outdoor grills can burn your child long after you have finished using them. If your child does get burned, immediately put cold water (not ice cold) on the burned area. Then cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth. Call your doctor for all burns.

Set the maximum temperature of your hot water heater to 120°F or less. This prevents burns if your child were to play with the

faucet and successfully turn on the hot water.

All homes should have smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Test the batteries on your smoke alarm every month to be sure that they work. Change the batteries twice a year on a date you'll remember, such as Daylight Saving Time and Standard Time change dates.

Prevent Excessive Sun Exposure

Avoid the sun during the hours of 10am to 4pm. If outside, stay in the shade, use a hat to protect your child's face, and use a sunscreen. Sun exposure during childhood can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin later in life.

Prevent Poisonings and Ingestions

Your child will be able to open any drawer and climb anywhere curiosity leads. Your child may swallow anything he or she finds. Our households have many dangerous things:

- Keep household products and medicines safely capped and out of sight and reach. Keep all products in their original containers.
- Small button (circular) batteries, balloons, and small magnets become dangerous in your toddler's hands. Swallowing or putting them into their nose can put your child in the hospital. Make sure to keep them out of areas where your toddler plays.

Liquid laundry and dishwasher packets have proven to be dangerous to toddlers. Keep them up high and out of reach.

Keep vapes and e-cigarette parts and liquid up high and out of reach as well.

If your child does put something poisonous in their mouth, call the poison help line immediately. Do not make your child vomit. Add the Universal Poison Control Number (1-800-222-1222) to your cell phone contacts or download the app from American Association of Poison Control Centers called WebPoisonControl. This will guide you on what to do in case of a possible poisoning.

Prevent Gun Injury

If you have children, it is best to not have a gun in your home. For those who keep a gun in the home, follow these safety rules:

- Always keep the gun unloaded and locked up.
- Lock and store the bullets in a separate place.
- Hide the keys to the locked boxes.

RESOURCES

Books

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5, from The American Academy of Pediatrics.

Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age 5, by Penelope Leach

Toddler 411: Clear Answers and Smart Advice for Your Toddler, by Ari Brown, Denise Fields

Websites

www.healthychildren.org

A parenting website developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Now available in Spanish.

www.common sense media.org

Common Sense Media helps families make smart media choices, with ratings of apps, games and movies.

www.healthychildren.org/English/media

Set a family media plan to help establish a healthy balance of family time and "screen-time" for your family.

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents

www.vaccineinformation.org

Rich websites with information on vaccines and the stories of those who lives have been touched by vaccine-preventable illness.

www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials

Frustrated with discipline? This resource gives great how-to modules on parenting.

www.zerotothree.org/parenting-resources

This is another parenting resource that discusses common parent struggles and solutions.

Make Safe Happen

An app available for iPhone and Android that gives a room-by-room checklist of how to keep your child safe.

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visit MyChartARC.com or ARCAppointments.com

Same-Day & After Hours Care
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24-Hr Phone Nurse
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