

# Three Year Visit

## NUTRITION

It is normal for many three year olds to be somewhat picky at mealtime. Preschoolers are very inconsistent about the quantity and variety of what they eat at any particular meal or on any particular day. If over the course of a week, your preschooler is eating a reasonably balanced diet, then he is doing okay. If you tried, you would likely be met with increased resistance. If your child is a picky eater, then desserts and snacks in between meals should be strictly limited. Kids can fill up enough on juices alone (juice and milk included) to take the edge off their meal time appetites. Inappropriate demands for junk food and drinks in general, should be ignored between meals. It is good for the whole family if you simply keep non-nutritious foods out of the house altogether. What is good for the kids is good for the parents.

## ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR CHILD

1. Encourage family exercise, such as walking, jogging, swimming, or bicycling (with helmets).
2. Read books together every day. At this age, children typically are able to follow the story line of simple books, and may ask you to read some books again and again.
3. Limit TV and video watching to no more than 1 to 2 hours each day. Monitor the types of shows your child watches. Try to watch with your children. Use TV shows as an opportunity for discussion and communication. Do not put a TV, DVD player or tablet in your child's bedroom.
4. Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children near your child's age. Supervision will be necessary, because children this age are not always ready to share and play cooperatively.

## SAFETY

1. Maryland law requires children to be in a car seat until at least their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday or are 4'9" or taller. The law further states that the car seat must fit the child by age, height and weight, and the child must be secured in the seat and vehicle according to the instructions of the vehicle and car seat manufacturers. For information on the latest recommendations and considerations, please visit [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) and search for "Car Seat Safety".
2. Supervise your child carefully when playing outside, including on the playground. Never leave your child alone in the car, house, or yard. Keep your child away from lawnmowers, driveways, and garage doors. Do not expect young brothers or sisters to watch over your child.
3. Teach your child the danger of following a thrown ball or a dog darting into the street. Do not count on the child remembering such instructions. Your child has to be closely supervised when near a street.
4. Watch your child constantly whenever near water, including bathtubs, play pools, buckets and toilet. "Knowing how to swim" does not make a child water-safe at this age. Always be a hand grab away. Be sure that swimming pools in your community, apartment complex or home have a 4-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
5. Firearms pose a potentially tragic threat to children of all ages. The best preventative measure is to not keep firearms at home at all. If firearms must be in the home, they must be stored unloaded, in a locked location. Take steps to ensure that firearms are not accessible in other homes where your child may spend time, such as day care providers', relatives', and friends' homes. Teach your child to never touch a firearm and reinforce this by not allowing toy guns as objects for play.
6. Make sure you have a working smoke detector on every level of your home. Develop an escape plan in the event of a fire in your home. Install a carbon monoxide detector near every sleeping area of your home.
7. Limit time spent in the sun. Put sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) on your child before he/she goes outside. Use a hat to shade the face, ears, nose and lips.

## **DENTAL CARE**

By three years of age your child should be seeing a dentist routinely. If you do not know a good dentist who is geared toward children, we would be happy to recommend one. Your child should be brushing their teeth regularly.

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