



DEVELOPMENTAL NOTES - THREE YEARS

Milestones:

At three years of age, most children can jump in place, learn to pedal a tricycle and walk up stairs with alternating steps. They can copy a circle, start dressing and undressing some articles of clothing, and stack a tower of at least eight blocks. They have active imaginations, engage in pretend play, and know their name and age. Language at age three should be at least seventy-five percent intelligible and include short sentences with plurals and past tense. Also, progression toward toilet training and self-feeding should occur.

Nutrition:

Refer to www.mypyramid.gov for suggestions on healthy eating and proper food portions.

Ensure your child is eating a well-balanced diet and avoiding “junk foods” which contain too much fat, salt and sugar. At this age, your child may continue to have a poor appetite or finicky food preferences. If so, offer smaller portions while at the same time providing a variety of foods on his plate. This will encourage him to try something new, but do not insist that he eat a full portion of an unfamiliar food. Also, try to make meals a shared family event which allows your child to look forward to the conversation and fun of a family eating together.

Vitamins:

If your child is an extremely finicky eater or drinks less than six ounces of fluoridated water each day, please ask our physicians regarding supplementary vitamins. Continue fluoride supplementation when indicated, and help your child to brush his teeth in the morning and before bedtime. You should also schedule a dental visit for your child by this age and at least yearly thereafter.

Elimination (Toilet Training):

By age three, many children have started toilet training. Dryness is achieved first in the daytime, and many still wet their beds at night. This is a normal pattern and no treatment is needed for children who are not yet dry at night.

Sleep:

At this age, your child may start skipping naptimes. Because of this, he may become irritable when overtired and may need help calming down. If your child needs a nap but refuses it, a “rest period” may be a good alternative. Also, consider an earlier bedtime once your child discontinues all naps, and make sure that activities before bedtime are relaxing such as reading a book.

Developmental Activities:

Encourage playing with building blocks and puzzles as well as pretend play with toys and household objects. Avoid passive activities such as watching too much television. Stimulate language development by reading books to your child and engaging him in direct conversation. Consider out-of-home activities such as nursery school and play groups which provide a good opportunity to learn important social skills like sharing and taking turns.