

# Child's Well Visit, 3 Years: Care Instructions

## Your Care Instructions

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Three-year-olds can have a range of feelings, such as being excited one minute to having a temper tantrum the next. Your child may try to push, hit, or bite other children. It may be hard for your child to understand how he or she feels and to listen to you.

At this age, your child may be ready to jump, hop, or ride a tricycle. Your child likely knows his or her name, age, and whether he or she is a boy or girl. He or she can copy easy shapes, like circles and crosses. Your child probably likes to dress and feed himself or herself.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

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### Eating

- Make meals a family time. Have nice conversations at mealtime and turn the TV off.
- Do not give your child foods that may cause choking, such as nuts, whole grapes, hard or sticky candy, or popcorn.
- Give your child healthy foods. Even if your child does not seem to like them at first, keep trying. Buy snack foods made from wheat, corn, rice, oats, or other grains, such as breads, cereals, tortillas, noodles, crackers, and muffins.
- Give your child fruits and vegetables every day. Try to give him or her five servings or more.
- Give your child at least two servings a day of nonfat or low-fat dairy foods and protein foods. Dairy foods include milk, yogurt, and cheese. Protein foods include lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dried beans, peas, lentils, and soybeans.
- Do not eat much fast food. Choose healthy snacks that are low in sugar, fat, and salt instead of candy, chips, and other junk foods.
- Offer water when your child is thirsty. Do not give your child juice drinks more than one time a day.
- Do not use food as a reward or punishment for your child's behavior.

### Healthy habits

- Help your child brush his or her teeth every day using a "pea-size" amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Limit your child's TV or video time to 1 to 2 hours per day. Check for TV programs that are good for 3 year olds.
- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around your child. Smoking around your child increases the child's risk for ear infections, asthma, colds, and pneumonia. If you need

help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.

## Safety

- For every ride in a car, secure your child into a properly installed car seat that meets all current safety standards. For questions about car seats and booster seats, call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-888-327-4236.
- Keep cleaning products and medicines in locked cabinets out of your child's reach. Keep the number for Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) near your phone.
- Put locks or guards on all windows above the first floor. Watch your child at all times near play equipment and stairs.
- Watch your child at all times when he or she is near water, including pools, hot tubs, and bathtubs.

## Parenting

- Read stories to your child every day. One way children learn to read is by hearing the same story over and over.
- Play games, talk, and sing to your child every day. Give them love and attention.
- Give your child simple chores to do. Children usually like to help.

## Potty training

- Let your child decide when to potty train. Your child will decide to use the potty when there is no reason to resist. Tell your child that the body makes "pee" and "poop" every day, and that those things want to go in the toilet. Ask your child to "help the poop get into the toilet." Then help your child use the potty as much as he or she needs help.
- Give praise and rewards. Give praise, smiles, hugs, and kisses for any success. Rewards can include toys, stickers, or a trip to the park. Sometimes it helps to have one big reward, such as a doll or a fire truck, that must be earned by using the toilet every day. Keep this toy in a place that can be easily seen. Try sticking stars on a calendar to keep track of your child's success.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You are concerned that your child is not growing or developing normally.
- You are worried about your child's behavior.
- You need more information about how to care for your child, or you have questions or concerns.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **W969** in the search box to learn more about "**Child's Well Visit, 3 Years: Care Instructions.**"

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