



## Injury Prevention



The most common accidents that occur at this age:

- **Car Seat Safety:** Continue to use a car seat for as long as your child will fit into it. New York requires a car seat for children under 4 and a safety restraint system for children under 7.
- **Bikes:** Emphasize a rule with your child that if there is no helmet, then there is no bike.
- **Accidents:** that also occur are related to guns, power tools, lawn mowers and plastic bags.
- **Drowning:** Do not leave your child unsupervised in or near a filled tub, pool, bucket of water, ditch or cesspool. Make sure any adults who supervise children in the pool (parents, babysitters, neighbors, etc), know how to swim.
- **Sunburns:** Use hypoallergenic sunscreen SPF 30. Avoid the sun between 10 am and 2 p.m. (highest UV rays). Studies show that skin cancer risk for melanoma has changed from 1 in 500 to 1 in 88; and is directly related to the number of sunburns your child gets before the age of 20.

## Nutrition

Many children in the United States lack the recommended 3-5 vegetables and 2 fruits per day. These should be offered daily in place of sugary and salty snacks. The best way to ensure lifelong behaviors is for parents to model the behaviors they want their child to have. If your drinking water does not contain fluoride, your child should NOW be taking ½ (0.5) mg daily.

## Growth and Development

Three year olds are more outgoing and cooperative than at age 2. They have wild imaginations and imaginary friends. Start to encourage washing, dressing and simple chores. It is common for them to notice the difference between sexes and to explore their own bodies.

- Provide opportunities to talk about your child's day.
- Begin to offer choices in situations, while setting limits: e.g. Red or yellow shirt? This story or that one?
- At this age you should work with your child about taking turns and sharing.
- Many children stammer and stutter their speech. This is normal.
- Your child may not understand when you are joking. Never threaten to leave or abandon him.
- There may be curiosity about where babies come from differences between boys and girls. Answer these questions honestly and at their

level of understanding. Use correct terms for the genitals.

## Healthy Habits

Make the first dental appointment for your child.

- Limit TV to 2 hours a day or less. This should include video and computer games. Monitor for content that is appropriate.

Remember the following recommendations for a healthy body:

- 5 servings of fruits/veggies per day
- 1-2 hours of screen time per day (Devices, TV, Video, Computer)
- 1 hour of physical activity per day (that increases heart rate)
- 0 intake of sweetened beverages

## Toilet Training

Bedwetting is normal at this age. By age 3, 90% of children are bowel trained, 15% wet during the daytime and 40% wet at night. See below for section

## Next Visit

Your next health visit will be the 4 year old well child visit.

## If Your Child Refuses to be Toilet Trained

Use the following only after previous methods have not worked and you feel your child is capable of going. The most common cause is reminding or lecturing a strong-willed child too much. Here's what to do now.

➤ **Transfer all responsibility to your child.** Have one last talk with your child about toilet learning. Tell your child that their body makes "pee" and "poop" every day and it belongs to him. Make clear, "Your poop wants to go in the toilet," and "Your job is to help your poop get out." Say, "I'm sorry I reminded you so much and made you sit on the toilet. From now on you don't need any help."

➤ **Stop all reminders about using the toilet.** Let your child decide when to go to the bathroom. When your child stops receiving attention for not going, they will eventually go.

➤ **Give incentives for using the toilet.** Your child needs plenty of smiles, praise, and hugs every time they pass a bowel movement or urine into the toilet. For the child who soils or wets on some days and not others, you should give this praise – and even take time to play a special game when your child is clean for a complete day. If you need a breakthrough, you can make your child an offer they "can't refuse," using candy or other treats.

➤ **Give stars for using the toilet.** Put up a calendar in a special place and put a star on it for every bowel movement or urination into the toilet. Keep this record of progress until your child has gone two weeks without any accidents.

➤ **If your child won't sit on the toilet, try to change their attitude.** First, give your child the choice of the big toilet or the potty chair. If

## The Wellness Times – 3 Years

Books, 1987.

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your child chooses the potty chair, make it a favorite place, using it as a chair while looking at books or watching something with their clothes on.

➤ **Remind your child to change after urination or bowel movement accidents.** Don't ask your child if they have soiled clothes – you know the answer. Respond, "You can't walk around wet or with a mess in your pants." Keep your child involved in the changing process.

➤ **Help your child succeed.** You, other caregivers, teachers, brothers and sisters must allow your child to go to the bathroom anytime. They must have clean underwear on hand and must not criticize or punish your child. And your child should not be put back in diapers unless a last resort.



#### Call if:

- You have followed the above for one month and have not seen any signs of improvement.
- Your child holds back bowel movements or becomes constipated.
- Your child has pain or burning during urination.

Adapted from Barton D. Schmitt, M.D., *Your Child's Health*, Bantam