

Nutrition

- Continue to avoid small, hard food that he/she may choke on like peanuts or popcorn. Cut firm, round foods (hot dogs, raw carrots, grapes, etc) into thin slices.
- Your toddler should be offered 3 meals per day and 2-3 nutritious snacks. Offer a variety of foods from the different food groups. Use fresh fruit or vegetables with nut butter as snacks.
- Try to use **organic foods** when possible to avoid exposure to pesticides, genetically modified foods and added hormones.
- Continue to offer **whole milk** to your child. Juice is not advised. If you have questions about **alternative milks**, please talk to your provider. Toddlers at this age **should have no more than 2 servings of dairy per day**, including milk (1 cup), cheese (1.5 oz), yogurt (¾ cup). When possible, try to choose organic grass-fed, whole fat dairy products without added sugar.
- Your child should be drinking from cups only at this point. Consider using **glass or stainless steel sippy cups** to avoid possible leaching of BPA (and other chemicals commonly found in plastics) into the liquid.
- Your toddler may become pickier. Do not limit the menu to food your toddler likes. Try to keep toddlers from “grazing”. Let your toddler decide how much and what to eat of the nutritious variety of foods you offer. If your toddler asks for more, give more; if your toddler stops eating, accept that decision.
- There are benefits to **omega-3 fatty acids** in the diet and here are the sources: fresh or frozen wild salmon, canned sockeye, sardines, black cod, herring, walnuts (or walnut butter), algae products, freshly ground flax and hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, omega-3 enriched eggs. Alternatively you can consider starting an omega 3 supplement: Preventively, for children 1-4 years of age the dose is 300-500 mg of DHA/EPA per day. Nordic Naturals is a trusted omega 3 product.
- Consider **vitamin D3 supplementation** for its immune and bone building properties. Recommended dose at this age is at least 600 IU daily.
- **Probiotic** supplementation and probiotic rich foods (such as organic kefir, grass-fed yogurt, miso, sauerkraut, kimchi) can be used to aid in immune function and digestion. Generally, probiotic supplements for children that are refrigerated are of higher quality.

Development

3 - 4 year olds:

- Gross Motor skills: jumps in place; walks up stairs alternating legs; kicks ball; pedals tricycle
- Fine Motor skills: uses utensils; scribbles; copies a circle; puts on some clothing; stacks about 8 blocks
- Cognitive skills: participates in pretend play; knows name, age, gender
- Language skills: speech is at least 75% understandable; talks in short sentences but may leave out articles (the, a, an), plural markings (cats) or tense markings (past or present); asks questions such as “what’s that?” and “why?”; understands prepositions and some adjectives. Many children undergo a period of mild disfluency of speech between 2-4 years of age. Allow your child time to express himself in words.
- Social skills: enjoys interactive play, may be oppositional or destructive, listens to short stories
- Adaptive skills: undresses, some dressing with help; feeds self; progress toward toilet training

Medication

- **FEVER = 101° F**
- **No Aspirin** until 18 years.
- **NO COUGH OR COLD MEDICINES.** If your child gets a cold, try humidified air. Please call our office if your child seems to be having difficulty breathing.
- **Tylenol** (Acetaminophen) or **Advil/Motrin** (Ibuprofen) may be given for fever or pain relief. **We recommend using these as sparingly as possible.**

Medication	How Often?	18-23 pounds	24-35 pounds	36-47 pounds	48-59 pounds	60-71 pounds	72-95 pounds	Over 95 pounds
Fever/Pain Relief								
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	4 hrs	120 mg	160 mg	240 mg	320 mg	400 mg	560 mg	720 mg
Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)	6 hrs	75 mg	100 mg	150 mg	200 mg	250 mg	300 mg	400 mg

Language/TV/exercise

- Read to your child every day! Encourage your child to finish phrases or help tell the story. Practice reading by looking at street signs or packages at the store. Encourage your child to talk to you about what he/she is experiencing. Sing songs and talk about what you are seeing and doing together.
- Try to limit TV time and other passive activities to less than one hour a day. Carefully screen programs (including commercials) to ensure that they are appropriate. Try to choose alternatives for time together like reading, singing, or playing games
- Try to be physically active with your child!

- Encourage your child to play with age-appropriate toys, and encourage interactive games with children of similar ages. Try to help your child understand the importance of sharing and taking turns.

Discipline

- Remember that the goal of discipline is to teach and protect your child, not to punish your child.
- Reward good behavior and accomplishments with frequent praise.
- Spend individual time with your child—take walks, read books, do puzzles. Focus on activities that interest your child.
- Avoid spanking, shouting, or long explanations.
- Do not allow hitting, biting, or other aggressive behavior. Stop these behaviors immediately and explain to your child how the behavior makes other people feel. Help your child to apologize.
- Children at this age want choice. “No” reflects a child’s developing identity and this desire for choice. Try to avoid battles by giving your child two appropriate choices that are both acceptable to you. For example, ask your child to choose between wearing the red sweater or the blue sweater.
- CONSISTENCY is extremely important. Discuss “house rules” with all family members and caregivers. Decide what limits are important and be specific when setting limits.

Potty training

- The average age for a child to be potty trained during the day is 30 months, but 10-15% of children will still not be potty trained at age 3. Nighttime dryness takes longer to attain.
- Children who have been potty trained even for a long time may experience regression, especially if changes occur at home (new baby, a move, parent returning to work, loss of a pet, etc.). Children may also become “too busy” to bother with the potty. Don’t punish accidents. Calmly have your child help you clean up, and encourage your child that he/she will remember to use the potty next time.
- Children are naturally curious about their own genitals. Sexual self-exploration is common at this age. Teach your child that while this exploration may be normal, it should be confined to his/her private space (ie, your child’s room) and not be done in public. Use the proper terms for your child’s genitals.

Sleep

- Most children at this age are giving up naps. Try to encourage “quiet time” in place of a nap.
- Keep a predictable bedtime routine with baths, reading, brushing teeth, etc.

Dental care

- Brush your child’s teeth twice a day with a soft brush and toothpaste with fluoride
- Your child should see the dentist twice a year

Car Seat

- **A car seat** must be used every time your child is in the car. Children should remain in car seats until 40 pounds. Booster seats are recommended until your child is 4’9”.
- Please see <http://www.carseatscolorado.com/> to find a car seat fitting station near you.

Safety

- Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector. Replace batteries once a year on your child’s birthday.
- Watch your child constantly whenever near water. Children should always wear an approved life jacket when on a boat or other watercraft.
- Keep furniture away from windows and install window guards on windows to prevent your child from falling out of a window.
- Young children should never be left unsupervised in or around vehicles. Watch your child closely when playing outside and make sure gates are locked. Keep your child away from lawn mowers, garage doors, streets, and driveways. Be very careful when backing out of the driveway—you may not be able to see your child behind your car.
- Have your child start to wear an approved helmet when riding a tricycle, on your bike, or in a bike trailer.
- Use sunscreen with minimum SPF 30. Try to avoid sunscreens with oxybenzone, parabens and phthalates. We recommend mineral sunscreens when possible but note that they are not as waterproof. For reviews of safe child sunscreen brands, please visit <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>
- Avoid **all** tobacco smoke around your child. Children who are exposed to smoke have more respiratory and ear infections.
- The best way to prevent injury or death from a firearm is to not have guns in the home. If it is necessary to have a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked in a separate location.
- Hire an experienced baby sitter who knows the basic care for children as well as how to handle common emergencies. Provide the sitter with a list emergency phone numbers, list of child’s allergies and current medications.
- Remove dangerous objects and chemicals from lower cabinets or place locks on those cabinets.
- **Poison Control: 303-739-1123 or 1-800-222-1222**

If you have questions about vaccines or vaccine safety, please ask your provider.

Your child’s next well check is at 4 years.