

# 3 Year Wellchild

naturopathic pediatrics







# 3 year well child guide to whole health

*Weight* \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_\_

# **Notes for the 3 year visit**

# 3 year well child guide

## Development

Most 3-year-old children:

- Can climb well and run.
- Can walk up and down stairs with one foot on each step.
- Can do simple puzzles with 3-4 pieces.
- Will turn book pages one at a time.
- Can turn door handles or unscrew jar lids.
- Will be able to talk well enough for strangers to understand what they say most of the time.
- Can say some plural words (dogs, trucks, dolls).
- Show concern for a parent, sibling or friend who is crying or hurt.
- Can speak in sentences.
- Can dress and undress many of their clothes (shirts and buttons are still hard).
- Can draw a rough circle with a pencil or crayon.

## When to be concerned

Speak with your child's provider if your child:

- Seems to fall down a lot, cannot walk up stairs, or must use her hands to push herself up to stand.
- Doesn't want to play with other children.
- Doesn't do *any* imaginative play (like pretending to talk on the phone).
- Doesn't speak in sentences, or if more than half of his words are unintelligible.
- Doesn't make eye contact.
- Can't figure out simple toys (simple puzzles, stacking blocks, putting objects in a container).
- Loses skills she once had.

## Nutrition

**Remember to model excellent eating behavior by filling your child's plate with a balance of fruits, veggies, proteins and whole grains at every meal.** Some toddlers continue to be extremely picky at age 3. Research shows that continued exposure to "undesirable" foods will encourage your child to eventually eat them on their own. It's okay to let kids use dips with their veggies; even ones that aren't super healthy like ketchup and salad dressing. Research also shows us that pairing veggies with fun "dips" helps kids learn to like the taste of the vegetable on its own. Try making your dip even healthier by using a homemade nut-butter veggie dip (there are lots of great recipes online).

Continue to give your toddler a choice between two healthy foods. In our opinion, the best way to keep food struggles to a minimum is to simply keep the cookies and candies out of the house in the first place. **Remember that the best model for healthy eating behavior comes from you!**

## Potty training

Most children by age 3 are fully or partially potty trained, or working on it. If your child isn't quite there yet don't stress! **Accidents are completely normal in 3-year-olds.** Never punish your child for having a bathroom accident. A simple "whoops" will suffice. Don't expect your child to be potty trained at night just yet. Most kids will learn to be nighttime dry sometime between age 3 and 5.

# Behavior

**3-year-old children typically have very short attention spans.** Plan for short outings or multiple activities to keep your toddler's attention. It is unrealistic to take your toddler to a long event that requires continuous focus.

Toddlers continue to have a poor sense of time, and often refer to future events in the past, or visa versa.

## **3-year-olds thrive with one-on-one individual attention.**

Nowadays the topic of discipline, particularly childhood discipline, can be emotionally charged and may even have a negative connotation. **Remember that discipline simply means training your child to gain a particular skill, or to avoid or prevent future behavior problems.** The word discipline comes from a Latin word which means “to teach!”

There are many different reasons for disciplining children. One is to keep our children safe. (E.g., to prevent your child from running out into the street, or prevent your child from going home with a stranger). Another one is to teach your children

Most 3-year-olds still need to nap daily. **You may notice your toddler has worsening behavior when she is hungry or tired.** Some parents also notice behavior changes shortly before a bowel movement (poop). Even minor changes in life or daily routine can upset a toddler; be careful if you decide to get a different haircut! **Many 3-year-olds start to have intense fears at some point this year - fear of strange noises, the dark, monsters, etc.**

**Power struggles can become intense at age three.** Nearly all 3-year-olds love to have control over their environment (or possibly their parents if they can get away with it). To lessen power struggles you can offer your child lots of choices! Simple questions like “do you want to wear the green socks or the orange socks?” will help your child feel empowered and less likely to fight you over other big decisions (like whether to get dressed in the first place). **Do not ask questions that imply a choice if there really is not one.** For example, the worst question to ask a toddler is “what do you want for dinner?” Be prepared for the answer “ice cream” and the inevitable tantrum that follows.

**3-year-olds often take things very literally.** Watch your language or your child may literally “hit the road” or “jump into bed.”

your family values. The way you discipline your child is going to be unique to you *and* to your child. We highly recommend sitting down as a family and writing out your shared values: things that are important that you want your children to grow up knowing. It is these shared values that will direct your family in how to discipline.

Whatever form of discipline you use the most important part is to be *consistent*. **Children feel most secure when their boundaries are clear and consequences are consistent.** Remember, it is your child’s job to push the boundaries and your job to keep them in place.

## **Screen time**

At age 3 we think it is developmentally appropriate to limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes of “active” plus 30 minutes of “passive” screen time daily. Active screen time is any learning or educational activity that requires true interaction. Passive screen time includes most television shows or mindless tablet or phone games. Having your child watch screens before bed can interfere with the production of melatonin, our “sleepy” hormone. Stop screen time at least 1 hour before bed. Avoid violent or mature games or shows for children, as toddlers have very little understanding of the difference between pretend and reality. **It is always best for your child to play rather than watch TV or play on a tablet or phone.**

**Avoid using screens to calm or distract your child.** Children who are given screen time during times of misbehavior then learn that their misbehavior is rewarded. Many of these kids do not learn to self-soothe on their own.

**Avoid having screen time on “in the background.”** We particularly recommend avoiding having news shows on TV or radio while children are around. Children have a very poor understanding of world affairs, and often internalize them. This doesn’t mean “sheltering” your kids from bad news, but rather speak to your children about news using language that children can understand. Give your child a chance to ask questions and answer them simply.

**Watch for your own use of screens!** Research shows that kids show more signs of distress and have poor attachment to parents who excessively use their smartphones. Model good behavior by limiting your own use of technology.

## **Safety**

**Make sure your child wears a good-fitting toddler helmet for biking, skiing and scooting.** Model good behavior by *always* wearing a helmet when you are doing these activities too.

Teach your child about the stove, matches, and fireplaces. Make sure she knows to never play with these. **Practice a family fire-escape plan.**

**Check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.**

**Watch your child when he is playing near a street.** Though 3-year-olds may begin to understand street safety they often forget about street dangers, particularly when chasing after a ball that rolls away from them. Never leave your child unsupervised near the street.

Similarly, always supervise your child when she is near a pool, hot tub, lake or area of water. Remember that any child who inhales water should be checked out by a medical provider to prevent “dry” or “secondary” drowning. (See [dry drowning\\*](#))

**Teach your child his full name (first and last), address and phone number.**

Dishwasher and laundry detergent pods look just like candy and are now the number one reason for calls to the Poison Control Center. Avoid them in your home whenever possible. If you do use these please keep them out of reach of children and teach your children that they are not candy or toys.

Continue to keep your child’s environment smoke-free. This includes smoke from cigarettes, marijuana, or E-cigarette vapor.

## **Play, Grow, Learn**

Play is an extremely important part of learning! Children learn social, emotional, and academic skills simply by playing with other children and with trusted adults.

**3-year-old children typically love sensory activities.** Great sensory play ideas include sand, mud, water and ice. Many of these free “toys” will keep kids busy far longer than toy-store items. Don’t forget about our other favorite free toys: sticks, rocks, grass, stumps! **Research shows that nature-based play improves academic performance, reduces attention deficit disorder, improves a child’s ability to focus, and reduces stress in children.** Families living in urban environments can sometimes struggle to get their children into nature. Research shows that bringing nature indoors also has positive health benefits. This can include having houseplants or bringing home a “nature collection” to play with. For example, you can collect sticks, rocks, and leaves from a park and keep them at home in a plastic bucket to play with anytime. House plants are a great way to introduce your child to nature. House plants reduce indoor air pollution and have a calming effect on children. Some house plants you can buy very cheaply at your local home improvement store. Make sure the plants you buy are non-toxic.

**Read to your child daily!** Early literacy skills are developing now. Children are much better prepared for kindergarten the more parents read to their children. Play games with letters and words, practicing sounds, and rolling out letters or shapes with Play-doh, or tracing letters on textured paper. Trace letters on laminated boards with fingerpaints, or have your child place stickers or dots on letters. The whole point is to expose your child to letters and numbers often, not to “drill” them about what they mean.

## **Vaccines\***

Again, we want to make it clear that we support families regardless of whether/how they choose to vaccinate. It is our goal to provide unbiased information on vaccines to allow parents to make a choice they feel good about!

Most 3-year-olds have completed the infant and early toddler vaccines. Children can receive the seasonal influenza vaccine yearly during flu season, if your family chooses to do so.

Check off which vaccines were given at this visit for your records (circle which side).  Influenza R / L



# Coming up...

## **What to expect from your toddler between 3 years and 4 years:**

- Will learn colors, numbers and often some letters.
- Will be able to play board games or card games.
- Will be able to start copying some letters.
- Will start to learn the idea of opposites, similars, and differences.

### **My child's milestones:**

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Topics listed with an asterisk (\*) have more information published on [www.naturopathicpediatrics.com](http://www.naturopathicpediatrics.com). Simply type the underlined phrase into the search box to find additional articles.

**Spotlight  
on:**

# Urtica dioica

**Common name:** Stinging nettles

**Part used:** fresh leaf. (Note: nettle leaf and nettle root are used differently. This guide covers the use of nettle leaf only.)

**Medicinal constituents:** flavonoid glycosides, caffeic and malic acid, minerals, vitamins, chlorophyll, sulfur, protein.

**Use for:** Nettles are best known for helping seasonal allergies. The most effective use of nettles for seasonal allergies is in freeze-dried capsules. Nettle leaf tea can also be used for children who cannot swallow capsules, but it will be less effective. (Do NOT open up nettle leaf capsules to give your child, as it does still sting!) Nettle leaf tea is also inflammation modulating and is incredibly nutritious. In fact, one cup of nettle tea is probably more nutritious than most multivitamins with synthetic ingredients. Nettle tea can be a mild diuretic, which also makes it helpful for urinary tract infections when you want to flush plenty of fluids through the bladder. Patients with kidney issues should consult their doctor before use. Otherwise this herb is incredibly safe, even for pregnant or nursing Moms. Warning: if you try to pick fresh nettles in the wild: wear gloves, it really does sting!

Typical dose recommended by herbalists\*\*

Age/weight	Dose	Times per day	Form
Adult (approx 150 lbs)	1-2 cups of tea, or 2-3 capsules.	Up to 5 times daily for acute conditions.	Capsules: make sure to buy <i>freeze-dried nettle capsules</i> free of other ingredients.
75-100 pounds	1 cup of tea or 2 capsules	Three times daily for chronic conditions.	
35-75 pounds	1/2 cup of tea or 1 capsule		Tea: 1-2 tablespoons of dried nettle leaf in 1 cup of boiling water. Let steep 10-15 min.
20-35 pounds	1/4 - 1/2 cup of tea		
Under 20 pounds (6+ months of age)	1 - 2 tablespoons of tea		

\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. This monograph is provided for informational purposes only and is not medical advice. Always consult your physician before using any herbal substance. \*\*Always consult a physician for appropriate dosage before use.