

## **PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR 3 YEAR-OLDS**

### **VACCINES:**

- \* Influenza #1 (flu) - prevents influenza, a serious viral illness (given during flu season only, typically Oct-March). May be given as an injection or a nasal spray.
- \* Most children do not get serious side effects from this vaccine. If side effects occur they are usually mild. Fever and discomfort at the injection site are common. Acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) can help. If you have concerns, please call us.

### **SCREENING TESTS:**

- \* Complete Blood Counts (CBC) or Hemoglobin (Hgb) – a test for anemia, or low red blood cell counts. In children, anemia usually is from not eating foods with enough iron.
- \* Lead level (Pb) – a test for lead poisoning. Please let us know if your home has lead paint or other lead hazards in it.

### **DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:**

Congratulations on being the parent of a three year old who is making the transition from toddler to preschooler!

Here are some developmental milestones and parenting tips for typical three year olds:

#### *Speech/language:*

- \* Most three year old children can speak in short sentences. Their speech is understandable to others most of the time.
- \* Three year old children can now use words to tell you what they want.
- \* In the next year your child will continue to learn new words, and he will be able to speak in more complex sentences. By four years of age, you should be able to understand nearly all of what your child says.

#### *Physical ability:*

- \* Most three year olds are quite good at feeding and are beginning to dress themselves.
- \* Your three year old should be able to throw a ball overhand, walk up stairs alternating feet, and starting to learn to pedal a tricycle.

- \* Three year olds can copy a circle and draw a person with 2 body parts.
- \* By age four, your child will be able to balance on one foot for two seconds, hop up and down, and brush her own teeth.

*Social/play:*

- \* Three year olds love dressing up, pretend play, and imitation. They can play cooperatively with their friends. They also can play on their own.
- \* Most three year olds are working on sharing and understand what it means to take turns. Remember, this usually takes some time and practice.
- \* By age four, your child will be able to play simple board and card games and more developed imaginative play.

*Behavior:*

- \* Three year old children are becoming more independent. Give your child the chance to make choices. Ask your child to tell you about her day, friends and activities. Remember that it is still very important to set limits consistently. This is most necessary for safety issues or important behaviors. Give you child choices within the limits you set.
- \* Three year old children do really well with having consistent routines for daily meals, naps and bedtime. Setting up these routines makes children feel safe. All family members should have the same rules.
- \* Children love their parents' attention. Hug and hold your child often and praise them for things that they do well. Also, show your child how to handle frustration well- time alone, the chance to be active and the importance of speaking respectfully. Use time outs or take away what is causing a problem.

**NUTRITION and EATING BEHAVIORS:**

- \* Enjoy meals together as a family when possible.
- \* Three year olds should drink skim or low fat (1%) milk now. Other than milk, we recommend that children drink water, not juice. Though it is common to give children juice, juice has a lot of sugar and is not as healthy as eating fruit.
- \* Children who do not drink at least 32 ounces of milk fortified with vitamin D each day will need extra vitamin D. If you have concerns that your child is not getting enough vitamin D, she may benefit from a multivitamin or vitamin D supplement. For children who cannot drink milk, be sure that alternatives like soy milk are fortified with vitamin D.

- \* Your child may seem as if they are not eating enough. As long as the child's growth and blood counts are good, try not to worry! Keep meals simple with just a few different types of food at each meal.

### **HYGIENE:**

- \* You should be brushing your child's teeth before bed and after breakfast as well. Try brushing after lunch, too, if you can. Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste and a brush with soft bristles. It is time for your child to see the dentist if they have not already done so. Ask us if you need a recommendation on where to go for care.
- \* Many three year olds are working on toilet training or are already toilet trained. Signs of being ready for toilet training are: staying dry for 2 hours, knowing if she is wet or dry, being able to pull pants up and down, and telling you if she is going to have a bowel movement BEFORE it happens. When you start toilet training, dress your child in clothing that can easily be removed. Place your child on the toilet every 1-2 hours. Be patient with this process and praise your child when he is successful. While most children finish training by this age, quite a few take some more time. Gently encourage your child to use the toilet. For more information on potty training, see <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/default.aspx>

### **TELEVISION and MEDIA:**

- \* It is better for children to play than watch TV. Try to limit TV and other screen time (computer/video/gaming) to no more than 1 hour per day. Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom.
- \* Be careful about the TV shows and ads your child sees. You will be amazed how much bad behavior your child can learn from watching TV. Do other activities with your child such as reading, playing games, and singing.
- \* Be active together as a family. Make sure your child is active while at home, at preschool, and with sitters. Try to let your child play outside even in cold weather.

### **SAFETY ISSUES:**

- \* Always have a mature adult supervising your child.
- \* Never leave your child unattended in or near water, even the bathtub.
- \* Make sure electrical cords and outlets are secured.
- \* Three year olds will climb and grab things. Be careful not to leave hot liquids within reach: pots with handles on the stove, hot cups

of coffee, etc... Keep young children away from fireplaces, space heaters, and other small appliances like clothes irons and curling irons. Keep flammable items like matches and lighters locked up or out of reach.

- \* Avoid choking hazards. Anything that can fit through a roll of toilet paper is too small for your child to play with.
- \* Keep all medicines, poisons and cleaning supplies stored in an upper, locked cabinet. Install cabinet locks.

**\*\*\*\*POISON CONTROL CENTER: 1-800-222-1222\*\*\*\***

**(Call this number if your child eats something that might be dangerous.)**

- \* Use a forward facing car safety seat. Young children should always sit in the back seat of all vehicles. A booster seat may still be needed if your child weighs more than 40 lbs. Check the instructions on your carseat.
- \* Your child is too young to cross the street alone. Always hold hands.
- \* Supervise play near streets and driveways.
- \* You can prevent falls by putting window guards on upper story windows that can be reached by your child. Avoid putting beds or sofas next to windows on upper floors. Remember: KIDS CAN'T FLY!
- \* No smoking in the house. We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. There are many resources at Cambridge Health Alliance to help you. Please ask your provider about this if you are interested in more information.

**NEXT VISIT:** age 4 years for a check-up/physical and as needed for other problems, illnesses, or injuries

### **WANT MORE INFORMATION?**

**The internet can be an excellent source of information on child health and development. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.**

**Check out *Bright Futures* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:**

**<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Other%203/B.ECh.PH.3yr.pdf>**

**Check out *Healthy Children* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:**

[www.healthychildren.org/](http://www.healthychildren.org/)

**Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for parent resources at:**

<http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx>

**Find us on Facebook at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/CHAPediatrics>

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