

2-3 YEAR CHECK UP

DIET

Children's diet should now change from a high fat (50% of calories from fat) to a low fat (30%) diet. While we were all raised that milk is good for you, it is actually very high in fat and most medical organizations now recommend drinking skim milk or no milk after 2 years of age. Calcium and vitamin D can be obtained from other sources (cheese, green leafy vegetables, fish, and sunlight). **Pacifiers** should be taken away by 2 to 3 years or sooner if the front teeth appear to be molding to the shape of the pacifier. **Vitamins** are only necessary if your child does not get a balanced diet. Many children, who don't seem to get a balanced diet, actually do get one if you average what they eat over a few days. In other words, they eat meats well one day, and fruits and vegetables well the next. You may still give a vitamin if you wish. Only give liquid vitamins until you are sure your child will not choke on a chewable. Vidalyn and Polyvisol are two liquid brands. Make sure to get the one with iron, and follow the direction on the box for the dose. If you have well water, please let the doctor know.

COMMON ILLNESSES & PROBLEMS

Temper tantrums and **behavior problems** are a common complaint at this age. There are probably more opinions on this subject than there are grandparents in the world. I will give you some basic pointers, but ultimately, you should listen to all those opinions (mine included) and as parents, decide how you want to proceed with the child rearing. The pointers:

- **Never hit a child.** 70% of pediatricians advocate corporal punishment only as a last resort or when safety is a concern
- **Be as consistent as possible.** This is the absolute key to raising a good child. If you cannot be consistent in how you react to your child's behavior problems, then you are going to have problems. This is probably more important than what you actually decide to do.
- **Try redirecting the child's attention.** A child's attention span is very limited, and they are easily moved to another area of interest when they are getting into something you don't want them into.
- **Don't expect more than your child is capable of.** You can't expect a 9 month old to be potty trained anymore than you can expect a 3 year old to stop something they are doing, and take out the trash.
- **Don't let your anger guide your decisions.** It is very easy to turn spanking into abuse, even by the best of parents.
- **You can reason with a child, just don't try to over-reason with them.** As the child's speech improves, you can bargain with them about expected behavior and punishments. Expect the

child to live up to his or her expectations, and apply the punishment you both decide on. Don't expect perfection.

- **Try to ignore what you can.** Just as a child is learning how to speak will say something again if you respond, they will misbehave again if they think you like it. Children often misinterpret "no" or anger for attention, and will still misbehave.
- **Praise them when they are good.** Children obviously need much love and attention. Children are like clay that is easily molded by a parent's love. While children are often born with a certain temperament, they can definitely be shaped by your love. Also, ignoring will not be effective unless the child knows the difference between this and attention.
- **Pick your battles.** When you ignore a child, they throw a bigger fit, and then you give in, you are only teaching that child that bigger fits gets them what they want. I have patients that can vomit at will to get what they want. It's very difficult to be consistent when you know the item you are fighting about is not important. The child innately knows this, and will simply push you. If it's not important, then give it to them. If it is important, then you had better send them a consistent message.

Most parents start **potty training** their children at about 2 years of age. There are many methods and which one you use probably doesn't matter much, just stick with one. I do have some basic pointers you should always follow:

- **Never make your child fearful of the toilet.**
- **Never chastise a child about potty training.** If any tension arises regarding potty training, then back off. If you chastise your child or push when there is tension, then your child will not like to go potty and will hold it. This will lead to constipation, then pain, then holding, then constipation, and so on.
- **Purchase a potty chair and allow your child to play and get acquainted with it.**
- **When your child indicates that he or she would like to use the chair, then place your child on the chair for a set period of time, or until something happens.**
- **If your child goes in the chair, then reward him or her with praise.**
- **To get your child to tell you when he or she HAS GONE,** simply reward them when they only tell you they have gone. Once they are telling you well enough, only reward them when they actually have gone. Do the same with telling you they HAVE TO GO.
- **Most children will urinate on the potty up to 6 months before they start having bowel movements on it.**
- **Your child is already trying to be independent in many ways.** Every time they do this, let them know that "big boys and girls get to do the things they want and big boys and girls also wear big boy or girl underwear and go potty on the big potty". This backfires when they want to be a baby, but it works for most kids.

- **Pull-ups and the new very absorbent diapers prevent your child from feeling urine on their skin.** While this prevents rashes well, it has led to later potty training. You can get around this by putting underwear in under the diaper or pull-up. This will allow them to feel the urine while preventing messes.

SAFETY

Remember to buy a helmet with the first tricycle. Children have had surprisingly bad head injuries from even falling off a tricycle. Please don't let this message prevent you from buying a tricycle, just buy the helmet also and be careful. Booster seats are meant to raise your child's hips enough that the seatbelt works as a lap belt should, instead of a waist belt. If the belt is above the hips, then it could tear into the abdominal organs or aorta with even a mild crash.

NEXT VISIT

We schedule checkups at 24, and 30 months, then every year starting at 3 years of age. Your child should not need another vaccine until they are 4 years old (except for foreign travel and any newly developed vaccines). At the 3 year visit, we do a finger stick test for anemia and a urinalysis (if they will urinate in a cup)