

Healthy Eating for Your Three-Year Old

Your child is now three going on thirty, acting and eating like an adult in many ways. It is important to remember that the needs and appetite of your growing child remain a central aspect of their development. A three year old will still require foods in amounts that are $\frac{2}{3}$ of a regular serving size according to the food guide pyramid. However now that they are older, some minor revisions can be made to their daily intake.



The Basics:

At three years of age your child can:



- Continue to enjoy serving sizes that are $\frac{2}{3}$ of a regular serving size according to the food guide pyramid. Visit www.usda.gov-cnpp-KidsPyra-PyrBook.pdf.url.
- Drink only skim milk, or low fat soy or rice milk. Children will continue to receive the fats they need from other sources in the diet. They no longer need all of the fat and calories associated with whole milk or 2% milk after the age of two unless there are concerns that your child is underweight.

Getting Started:

- Allow your 3-year old to help with food preparation in the kitchen. They will enjoy wrapping foods and trays in aluminum foil, adding ingredients and mixing recipes, and of course helping with clean up.
- Provide adequate calories for your little one without promoting overweight. The average three year old needs 50 calories/pound of body weight each day. That means a 35 pound child would need 1750 calories/day.
- Provide adequate protein for growth
 - Your three year old needs about 1 ounce of protein for every 10 pounds of body weight. That equals 3.5 ounces for a 35 pound child. Remember 3 ounces of a protein food like meat, chicken or cheese looks like a deck of cards.
- Encourage a diet high in fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans) to help with constipation which is common in toddlers.
 - Your three year old needs about 8 grams of fiber per day.
- Encourage daily activity and exercise. It is never too young to teach your children about the importance of moving their bodies.
 - Set aside time most days when your child is encouraged to get their heart rate up and have fun.
 - This can include dancing to music, going for a walk, participating in a child's exercise video or playing around outside.

