

AND BABY TURNS THREE

Some three-year-olds have figured out that one of the essential ways to stay alive is to eat the food that Mommy and Daddy give them, as long as the foods are not green and are not overloaded with nutritional substances, such as vitamins and minerals. Usually small children specialize in macaroni and cheese and peanut butter, although some adventurous ones have been known to eat raisins—but only if they're allowed first to dissect the raisins and wear them for a while on the tips of their fingers.

Many three-year-olds, though, are still on the Toddler Diet Plan, which has much more variety and isn't as unimaginative as the regular human diet. On this menu plan, foods are to be enjoyed as a whole-body experience—rubbed into hair and skin, or stuffed underneath shirts (for those times when the route to the stomach through the esophagus seems so tedious.)

A typical breakfast on the Toddler Diet Plan would consist of a bowl of corn flakes and milk—left to sit for half an hour so that each corn flake is holding the maximum amount of milk. (This is much like the concept of wine being left out “breathe” and is absolutely essential.) Then three bites are taken and the rest is poured slowly and systematically onto the floor, where the dog licks it up. Afterward, for additional nutritional value, one must kiss the dog on the mouth, licking off any flakes that may have stuck to fur.

Lunch on the Toddler Diet Plan should consist of two bites of a banana (then the rest must be smashed and rubbed on shirt), a stick from the backyard (preferably moistened in a glass of apple juice), and if there's still room, a few bites of dog kibble. (The chicken flavor is recommended.) If a tomato is available, one may eat four of the seeds before yelling “Yuck!” and rubbing the rest in the hair. A typical afternoon snack would include a couple of crayons (orange and red are always top choices, but wrappers should be off) and a glass of milk (two sips and then the rest is spilled on the shirt so it can be sucked later). Also, it's helpful to lick ten potato chips before storing them in the couch cushions for another day.

Dinner should be a stick of broccoli mashed up in apple juice, as well as any crumbs found underneath the kitchen table. A conscientious toddler will eat the breading off one chicken nugget and throw the rest on the floor. If still hungry, one can always dredge up a cookie that was put in the toy box weeks ago and which would be delicious if it were dipped in bath water. And, of course, a few squirts of liquid soap always makes a nice garnish for a cookie.

For maximum culinary enjoyment, the evening can be polished off with a nightcap of toothpaste, at least one-quarter of a tube, washed down with tap water.