

6 Month Check-up

Normal Development Your baby may...

Social:

- Recognize familiar faces
- Recognize whether a person is a stranger
- Follow you around the room with his eyes

Language/Communication:

- Use a string of vowels together (babbling “ah,” “eh,” “oh”) and enjoy vocal turn taking
- Recognize his own name

- Put everything in his mouth as he learns and explores his environment

Motor skills:

- Sit with support
- Roll over from front to back, and back to front
- Stand on his legs
- Grasp an object and transfer it to the other hand, or bang two objects together

Sleep

- At this age babies sleep on average between 12-13 hours per day.
- By 6 months, some, but not all, babies are sleeping for longer stretches at night (6 to 8 hours) “through the night.”
- Place your baby in his crib when he is drowsy, and even patting him to sleep, to help him learn to put himself to sleep. Then, when he awakens at night, he will be more likely to be able to go back to sleep without your help. This approach will help both you and your baby get a good night’s sleep.
- Continue to put your baby to sleep on his back, even if he is able to roll over on his own.
- Your baby should sleep in his own crib, not in your bed. If you breastfeed or bottle-feed your baby in your bed, return him to his own crib or bassinet when you both are ready to go back to sleep.

Diet

- In the next 6 months, it is typical for your baby’s growth to slow down a little, as you can see on the growth chart.
- Your baby should continue breast milk or formula until 1 year of age.
- Older infants generally consume 24 to 32 oz of formula per day with complementary food, but larger infants (6 months old, 90th percentile for weight) may take as much as 42 oz of formula per day without complementary foods.
- Your baby is probably ready to begin eating solid foods if you haven’t begun to already.
- See ‘Starting Solids’ handout
- Do not give your baby honey until after 1 year of age.
- To prevent choking, limit “finger foods” to soft bits not much larger than a Cheerio. Children younger than 4 years should not eat hard food like nuts or popcorn.
- Vitamin D- Lack of Vitamin D can cause rickets, or brittle bones. All breastfed babies need supplemental Vitamin D. Give 1 cc of Polyvisol or Trivisol every day.
- Fluoride- Usually your child needs no additional fluoride. Your child gets fluoride in tap water. Because the fluoride content of bottled water and well water varies, you should use tap water in mixing your child’s formula, and for general drinking and cooking.
- Iron- Usually iron drops are not necessary. Your child gets iron in breast milk and iron-fortified formula. Baby food started around 4-6 months of age is also a good source of iron

Hygiene

- The first tooth usually appears sometime between 5-7 months. Drooling, irritability, and constant chewing on fingers or other objects are signs that teething is in progress. Teething rings or biscuits may provide some comfort for sore gums. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be given if sleep is disturbed or if your baby is very irritable or uncomfortable.
- Begin early dental care with the eruption of the first tooth. Use a soft toothbrush or cloth to clean your baby’s teeth with water only. Your baby will visit the dentist for the first time when he is 3 years old.

Stimulation

- At this age, your baby may still have fussy periods.

Safety

- Keep your baby's car seat rear facing in the back seat of the vehicle until your baby is at least 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds.
- Always keep one hand on your baby when changing diapers or clothing on a changing table, couch, or bed, especially as she begins to roll over. Falls are the most common reason for emergency room visits for injury.
- Infant walkers should not be used by young children at any age. They are frequently associated with falls and can slow development of motor skills in children.
- Avoid holding your baby when you are cooking, drinking hot liquids, or smoking.
- A baby should not be left alone for even a second in a tub of water, even if using a bath ring or seat.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor, and change the batteries every 6 months.
- As your baby starts crawling, lock up all medicines and keep all household cleaners and poisons out of reach. Keep the Poison Control Center number handy 1-800-222-1222. Watch your baby carefully when visiting friends or relatives, as accidents frequently occur in these places.
- Secure heavy electronics and furniture that might tip over before your baby pulls to stand as you don't want these to topple over onto him.
- Install baby gates around stairs and barriers around space heaters if you have them.

Health Maintenance

- Immunizations- See immunization handout.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Please go to www.vapg.com and click on "Medicine Dosages" for correct dose of tylenol.
- Your baby's next check up is at 9 months age.