

9 Month Check-up

Normal Development: Your baby may...

Social:

- Have developed apprehension with strangers
- Seek parent for play and comfort, and as a resource
- Respond to name

Language/Communication:

- Use wide variety of repetitive consonants and vowel sounds
- Start to point out objects
- Begin to say 'Dada' and 'Mama', although nonspecifically

Sleep

- At around 9 months, it is not unusual for infants who have been sleeping through the night to begin to awaken. Until this age, he was waking during his normal sleep cycle, but usually fell back to sleep. Now, when he awakens, he realizes that he is in a dark room without his parents. This realization generally leads to distressed crying.
- If your baby is waking in the night, continue to just check on him and settle him back to sleep. This routine can help your baby put himself back to sleep.
- This is an age when sleep routines that help your baby gradually relax and get ready for sleep are especially important. The pre-bedtime hour, before the routine begins, should be especially affectionate and nurturing. Disruptions in routine, such as vacations, visitors, or late evenings out, can disturb sleep patterns.

Diet

- Try to be patient and understanding as your baby tries new foods and learns to feed herself. Removing distractions, like television, will help her stay focused on eating. Remember, it may take 10 to 15 tries before your baby will accept a new food.
- Your baby should continue breast milk or formula until 1 year of age.
- As your baby becomes more independent in feeding herself, remember that you are responsible for providing a variety of sufficient nutritious foods, but she is responsible for deciding how much to eat.
- Most infants at this age can be on the same eating schedule as the family (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), plus a mid-morning, afternoon, and bedtime snack. The amount of food taken at a single feeding may vary and may not be a large amount, but the 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks help ensure that your baby is exposed to a variety of foods and receives adequate nutrition. Snacks can be an opportunity to try new foods.
- Giving your baby foods of varying textures (e.g., pureed, blended, mashed, finely chopped, and soft lumps) will help her successfully go through the change from gumming to chewing foods. Slowly introducing solid textures during this time may decrease the risk of feeding problems, refusing to chew, or vomiting. Gradually increase table foods. Avoid mixed textures, like broth with vegetables, because they are the most difficult for infants and toddlers to eat.
- Encourage your baby to drink from a cup with help.
- Juice may be served as part of a snack but should be limited to 4 oz per day. Avoid the use of sweetened drinks, such as sodas and artificially flavored "fruit" drinks. These drinks provide calories but no nutrients.
- Foods with the highest allergen risk such as eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish, should not be introduced until after 1 year or even later. If your family has a history of allergies to these foods, you should consider waiting until after 2 years of age to introduce these foods.
- 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.

Cognitive:

- Develop object permanence, or the ability to understand that an object exists even if it is out of sight.
- Learn interactive games, such as "peek-a-boo" and "so big"
- Look at books and explore environment, physically and visually

Motor skills:

- Crawl, get to sitting, or begin to pull to stand
- Wave bye-bye

Hygiene

- 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 9 months of age, infants are at the height of stranger awareness. The intensity of their responses to strangers is highly variable.
- Your baby's way of learning is changing from exploring with his eyes and putting things in his mouth, to noticing cause and effect, imitating others, and understanding that objects he cannot see still exist.
- Fun things for your baby at this age are balls that you can roll back and forth, toy cars and trucks that he can push, and blocks that can be put into a container and dumped out. Songs with clapping and gestures and songs with finger actions will help him learn imitation. Peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek are great ways to help him understand "object permanence."
- Supply your baby with pots, pans, and wooden spoons for a "kitchen orchestra." Your baby will love creating and manipulating sounds.
- Children younger than 2 years should not watch TV, DVDs, or videos, or use computer products.

Discipline

- A critical step in establishing discipline is to limit "No" to the most important issues. Then, when an important issue comes up (such as your baby going toward the stove or radiator), saying, "NO, hot, don't touch" and removing the baby will have real meaning for her.
- Because infants have a natural curiosity about objects they see their parents using but also a short attention span, distraction and replacing a forbidden object with one that is permissible are excellent strategies for managing your baby's behavior in a positive way.
- Another aspect of discipline is consistency between parents, other family members, and child care providers. It is important to discuss what behaviors are allowed and what behaviors are not allowed. Have this discussion with your partner, family members, and child care provider. Some simple rules for your child can be established, such as saying, "Don't touch," for certain objects.
- Try to praise good behavior so he'll do it more often. Kids want attention most of the time.

Safety

- As your baby begins to stand at the crib, it is important to lower the mattress in your baby's crib to the lowest level before he learns to stand up. If bumper pads are used, remove them when the baby begins to stand so that they cannot be used as steps.
- 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.
- A baby should not be left alone for even a second in a tub of water, even if using a bath ring or seat. A supervising adult should be within an arm's reach, providing "touch supervision," whenever young children are in or around water. Empty buckets, tubs, or small pools immediately after you use them.
- Do not let young brothers or sisters watch over your toddler in the bathtub, house, yard, or playground.
- The best way to keep your child safe from injury or death from guns is to never have a gun in the home. If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home or if the homes of people you visit have guns, they should be stored unloaded and locked, with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- 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 12 months age.