

Well Child Care at 9 Months

Feeding

Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Most babies now take 6 to 8 ounces of formula 4 times a day. Encourage your child to drink formula and juice from a cup now. This is a good time to begin weaning from the bottle.

You can begin adding meat to your child's diet.

By now, many children have 2 or more teeth. After meals and before bedtime, try to wash off the teeth with a clean cloth.

Development and Behavior

Babies are starting to pull themselves up to stand. They love to bang things together to make sounds. They may start to say "dada" and "mama."

At this age, babies learn what "no" means. Say "no" calmly and firmly and either take away the item that your child should not be playing with or remove him from the situation. If your child continues to do what you told him not to do, you can put your baby in a playpen for 1 minute without any toys or attention from you. It is a good idea to be both gentle and firmly in control.

Give your baby a choice of toys. Talk to him about the toy he chooses and what he is doing with the toy. Give lots of kisses and hugs. Peek-a-boo is a favorite game.

9-month-olds have a lot of energy and it requires a lot of energy to take care of them. Make sure you get enough rest. Ask friends and family for help so you can take a break and rest. If you are rested, you will be better able to take care of your child.

Sleep

A regular bedtime hour and routine are important. Babies enjoy looking at picture books. You may want to read one regularly with your child. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal may help your baby feel secure at bedtime. If your baby wakes up a lot at night, ask your doctor or nurse for advice.

Safety Tips

Car Seat Safety

If your child reaches 20 pounds and is still riding in an infant seat, it is time for a new car seat. Some car seats can convert from a backward-facing infant seat to a forward-facing toddler seat. Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing new or converting old car seats for your child. For more information you can call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-800-424-9393.

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Avoid foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts).
- Cut food into small pieces.
- Store toys in a chest without a dropping lid.

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Practice your fire escape plan.
- Check your smoke detector to make sure it is working.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.
- Keep hot appliances and cords out of reach.
- Keep all electrical appliances out of the bathroom.
- Don't cook when your child is at your feet.
- Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

Prevent Drowning

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone -- NEVER.
- Continuously supervise your baby around any water, including toilets and buckets. Infants can drown in a bucket that has water in it. Empty all water and store buckets turned over.

Avoid Falls

- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.
- Don't underestimate your child's ability to climb.

Prevent Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and gardening chemicals locked away or disposed of safely.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- Keep the poison center number on all phones. The poison control number is 1-800-222-1222
- Ask your doctor about syrup or ipecac. Use it only if you are told to do so.

Avoid Cuts

Remove or pad furniture with sharp corners. Keep sharp objects out of reach.

Next Visit

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 12 months. Please bring your shot card.

Normal Development: 9 Months Old

Here's what you might see your baby doing between the ages of 9 and 12 months.

Daily Activities

- Continues to enjoy banging, waving, and throwing toys.
- scrutinizes toys and other objects.
- Becomes absorbed in toys and games.
- Explores food with fingers.
- Initiates play.

Motor Skills

- Goes from sitting to lying position unassisted.
- May pull self to standing position.
- Stands holding on to furniture.
- Tries to move one foot in front of the other when held upright.
- May try to crawl up stairs.
- May begin to walk with assistance.

Language Development

- Imitates the rising and falling sounds of adult conversation.
- Imitates more speech sounds, but does not yet understand them.
- Repeats sounds again and again.
- May begin to say "mama" or "dada" appropriately.

Emotional and Behavioral Development

- Continues to resist doing what does not want to do.
- Begins trying to imitate some parent behaviors.
- Loves showing off for family audience.
- May cry when parent leaves the room.

- May resist diapering.

Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones.

If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, check with your family physician.