

Well Child Care at 9 Months

Feeding

Your baby should continue to have breast milk or infant formula until 1 year of age. Babies at this age will eat 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day. Encourage your child to drink milk and juice from a cup now. This is a good time to begin weaning from the bottle. Do not let your baby keep the bottle between meal times.

If your family eats meat, you can add meat to your child's diet.

Development

Babies are starting to pull themselves up to stand. They love to bang things together to make sounds. Soon, 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. Comfort your baby by using a soothing voice and being gentle with him.

Give your baby a choice of toys. Talk to him about the toy he chooses and what he is doing with the toy. 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. Never put your baby in bed with a bottle. Put your baby to bed awake, but drowsy. If your baby wakes up a lot at night, ask your doctor or nurse for advice.

Shoes

Shoes protect your child's feet, but are not necessary when your child is learning to walk inside. When your child finally needs shoes, choose a flexible sole tennis shoe or moccasin.

Reading and Electronic Media

Your child will enjoy feeling the rough and smooth textures found in "touching" books and listening to the sounds of nonsense verse and nursery rhymes. You'll be surprised at how quickly she will learn to join in the rhymes and songs. Do not prop an infant in front of a television.

Dental Care

By now, many children have 2 or more teeth. After meals and before bedtime, try to wash off the teeth with a clean cloth. Don't worry too much about getting every last bit off the teeth. Try to make this a fun time for your baby.

Safety Tips

Child-proof the home. Remove or pad furniture with sharp corners. Keep sharp objects out of reach.

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.

Fires and Burns

- 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).

Falls

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

Car 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.

Water Safety

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone — NEVER.
- Be within arm's reach of 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.

Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and other chemicals locked away. Dispose of them safely.
- Put safety latches on cabinets.
- Keep the poison center number on all phones.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.

Immunizations

At the 9-month visit, your child may not receive shots. Children over 6 months of age should receive an annual flu shot.

Next Visit

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 12 months. Bring your child's shot card to all visits.

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