

Health and Wellness: 9 Months

Development

At this age, your baby may:

- sit well
- crawl or creep (your baby may never crawl)
- pull self up to stand
- use his or her fingers to feed
- imitate sounds and babble (dada, mama, bababa)
- respond when his or her name or a familiar object is called
- understand a few words such as “no-no” or “bye”
- start to understand that an object hidden by a cloth is still there (object permanence).

Feeding Tips

- Your baby’s appetite will decrease. He or she will also drink less breastmilk or formula.
- Have your baby start to use a sippy cup instead and start weaning him or her off the bottle.
- Let your child explore finger foods. It’s OK if he or she gets messy.
- You can give your baby table foods as long as the foods are soft or cut into small pieces. Do not give your baby junk food.
- Give your baby 400 IU of a vitamin D supplement every day.

Sleep

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in your room in a crib or bassinet (not in the same bed).
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends sharing a bedroom for at least the first 6 months, or preferably until your baby turns 1.
 - Co-sleeping (sleeping in the same bed with your baby) is not recommended.
 - Don’t let your baby sleep with a sibling.
- Your baby should be able to sleep through the night. If your baby wakes up during the night, he or she should go back asleep without your help.
- Start a nighttime routine: bath, brushing teeth and reading. Be sure to stick with this routine each night.
- Give your baby the same safe toy or blanket for comfort.
- If you put your baby to sleep with a pacifier, take the pacifier out after your baby falls asleep.
- You should not take your baby out of the crib if he or she wakes up during the night. Teething discomfort may cause problems with your baby’s sleep and appetite.

Safety

- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your baby every time he or she rides in a vehicle. The car seat must be properly secured in the back seat.

(over)

- The car seat should be rear-facing (facing the rear window) until your baby is at least 2 years old. Ideally your baby should continue to be rear-facing until he or she passes the height and weight limits for his or her convertible (toddler) car seat.
- Car seat straps should fit snugly against your baby.
- Layer blankets or car seat covers over your baby as needed for warmth. Snowsuits are not necessary.
- Be a good role model for your baby. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Put gates on all stairways.
- Never put hot liquids near table or countertop edges. Keep your baby away from a hot stove, oven and furnace.
- Turn your hot water heater to less than 120 F.
- If your baby gets a burn, run the affected body part under cold water and call the clinic right away.
- Never leave your child alone in the bathtub or near water. A child can drown in as little as one inch of water.
- Do not let your baby get small objects such as toys, nuts, coins, hot dog pieces, peanuts, popcorn, raisins or grapes. These items may cause choking.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your baby's reach.
- Call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) or your health care provider for directions in case your baby swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program them into your phone.
- Keep your baby out of the sun. If your baby is outside, use sunscreen with a SPF of more than 15. Try to put your baby under shade or an umbrella and put a hat on his or her head.

What Your Baby Needs

- Your baby will become more independent. Let your baby explore.
- Play with your baby. He or she will imitate your actions and sounds. This is how your baby learns.
- Read to your baby often. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.
- You can use discipline to control negative behaviors and encourage positive ones. Be sure to set limits and teach your child appropriately so he or she will learn to get along with others. Your child may feel more secure with limits and will know what you expect. Be consistent with your limits and discipline, even if this makes your baby unhappy at the moment.
- Practice saying "no" only when your baby is in danger. At other times, offer a different choice or another toy for your baby.
- Never use physical punishment.
- **Never shake or hit your baby.** If you are losing control, take a few deep breaths, put your child in a safe place and go into another room for a few minutes. If possible, have someone else watch your child so you can take a break. Call a friend, your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.

Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting at age 3 years or earlier if there are questions or concerns. (Your baby may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)
- Clean your baby's mouth and teeth with a clean cloth or a soft toothbrush and water.

Lab Work

Your baby may have his or her hemoglobin and lead levels checked.

- Hemoglobin – This is a blood test to check for anemia (low iron in the blood).
- Lead – This is a blood test to look for high levels of lead in the blood. Lead is a metal that can get into a baby's body from many things. Evidence shows that lead can be harmful to a baby if the level is too high.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your baby may receive this shot at this time:

- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.

Your Baby's Next Well Checkup

Your baby's next well checkup will be at 12 months.

Your child may need shots for:

- HepA (hepatitis A)
- PCV13 (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, 13-valent)
- influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.