

Health and Wellness: 6 Months

Development

In the next 3 months, your baby may:

- play “peek a boo”
- be afraid of strangers
- transfer objects from one hand to the other
- use his or her pincer grasp
- imitate sounds that his or her caregiver(s) make
- make sounds like “mama,” “dada” or “baba”
- start to crawl
- stand while holding on
- sit without support.

Feeding Tips

- Give your baby breastmilk or formula until his or her first birthday.
- You may introduce solid baby foods: cereal, fruits, vegetables and meats. Avoid added sugar and salt. If giving table foods make sure they are small enough or soft enough to prevent choking.
- Avoid honey until your baby is 1 year old. Giving honey to a child younger than 1 year old could cause botulism (food poisoning).
- Talk with your health care provider about giving your baby a vitamin D supplement.

Stools

- Your baby’s bowel movements may change in frequency and consistency, have a strong odor, or become a different color when he or she starts eating solids.

Sleep

- Put your baby to sleep when he or she is sleepy but still awake. This will help your baby learn how to comfort himself or herself before falling asleep.
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in your room in a crib or bassinet. Never use an adult bed, couch, sofa, or chair as a place for your baby to sleep.
 - Bed-sharing is not recommended. Do not let anyone sleep with your baby.
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends sharing a bedroom for at least the first 6 months, or preferably until your baby turns 1.
- Create a calming bedtime routine. This can include giving a bath, reading books or singing songs.
- Your baby may sleep about 14 hours each day.
- Try not to pick your baby up if he or she wakes during the night. You can comfort your baby while he or she lies in the crib.
- Most babies can go at least 8 hours at night without eating.

(over)

Safety

■ Never shake or hit your baby.

— If you are losing control, take a few deep breaths, put your baby in a safe place and go into another room for a few minutes. If possible, have someone else watch your baby so you can take a break. Call a friend, your local Crisis Nursery or United Way at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.

■ 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.

— 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 for warmth. Snowsuits are not necessary.

■ Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.

■ Keep your baby out of the sun. If you are outside, dress your baby in a hat, long-sleeved shirt and pants. Sunscreen can be used as needed. Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 when your baby is outside. Use a brand with the active ingredients titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Avoid any that contain oxybenzone.

■ Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons locked and out of your baby's reach.

■ Call the poison control center or your health provider for instructions in case your baby swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your phone or program them into your phone.

■ Childproof your house once your baby begins to scoot and crawl. Use outlet covers, cover any sharp furniture corners, eliminate dangling cords (including window blinds) and tablecloths, put gates on all stairways, and consider child locks on cabinet drawers and doors.

■ Do not hold your baby while drinking hot liquids or cooking.

■ Use a pack and play or crib to keep your baby safe if you are not in the same room as him or her, such as when taking a shower.

■ Turn your water heater to its lowest setting (lower than 120 F).

■ Do not let your baby get small objects such as toys, nuts, coins, etc. These items may cause choking.

■ Do not use infant walkers. They can cause serious accidents.

■ Never place a string or necklace around your baby's neck due to the risk of strangulation. This also applies to attaching a pacifier to a string or cord.

■ Do not let anyone smoke or vape in your house or car at any time.

What To Know About Screen Time

■ The first two years of life are critical for the growth and development of your baby's brain. Your baby needs positive interaction with other children and adults.

■ Screen time includes watching television and using devices such as cellphones, video games, computers and other electronics.

■ Screen time has a negative effect on your baby's development. This is especially true when your baby is learning to talk and play with others.

■ The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend any screen time (except for video-chatting) for children younger than 18 months.

What Your Baby Needs

- Play games such as “peek-a-boo” and “so big” with your baby.
- Talk to your baby and respond to his or her sounds. This will help stimulate speech.
- Give your baby age-appropriate toys.
- Give your baby lots of eye contact and talk, sing and read to your baby often. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.
- Your baby may have separation anxiety. This means he or she may get upset when a parent leaves. This is normal and should not stop you and your partner from getting out of the house occasionally while your baby stays home with a babysitter.
- Your baby does not understand the meaning of “no.” You will have to remove him or her from unsafe situations.
- Your baby fusses or cries due to a need or frustration. He or she is not crying to upset you or to be naughty.

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 with a clean cloth or a soft toothbrush and water.

Community and Health Information Resources

- **Healthy Children**
— healthychildren.org
- **Poison Control**
— 1-800-222-1222 or poison.org
- **Circle of Moms**
— wellness.allinahealth.org/events/41553

Minnesota

- **MinnesotaHelp.info**[®]
— mnhelp.info
- **United Way**
— 211unitedway.org
— dial 211 or 651-291-0211
- **Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program**
— health.state.mn.us/wic
- **Early Childhood Family Education**
— education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/elsprog/ECFE
- **Parent Aware**
— parentaware.org
- **Help Me Grow**
— helpmegrowmn.org

Wisconsin

- **211 Wisconsin**
— 211wisconsin.communityos.org
— dial 211 or 1-877-947-2211
- **Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program**
— dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic
- **Early Childhood Family Education**
— dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood
- **Child Aware of America (Wisconsin)**
— childcareaware.org/state/wisconsin
- **Birth to 3 Program**
— dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3

Your Baby's Next Well Checkup

- Your baby's next well checkup will be at 9 months.
- Your baby may need this vaccination:
 - influenza.

Information about the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is available if your child is eligible for the program. VFC is a federally funded program that offers vaccines at no cost.

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