Caring for Your Baby
6-12 Months

First 1,000 Days®

Helping Families Be Healthy from the Beginning
Caring for Your 6-12 Month Old

1. Slowly have your baby try new tastes and textures, offering the same food many times. If breastfeeding, keep it up! It is best to keep giving your baby some breast milk for the first 12 months.

2. Learn your baby’s signs of hunger and fullness. Only feed when you see signs of hunger, and stop feeding when your baby shows signs of being full.

3. Give your baby active play time every day.

4. 6-12 month olds need 12-15 hours of sleep a day. Sleep is an important time for healthy growth and brain development.

5. No screen time for babies until at least 18 months.
Your Baby’s Sleep

- Most 6-12 month olds sleep 12 to 15 hours a day. That includes 2-4 hours of daytime naps and longer sleep at night.

- It is normal at this age to sleep all night, but there can also be short times of waking up. Teething or not wanting to be apart from you can make it harder for your baby to sleep.

- By 6 months your baby does not need to feed in the middle of the night, but feeding at night may be a habit. Talk to your doctor about how to stop feeding during the night.

- Try to calm your baby by rocking, singing, and making “sh, sh” sounds. Then put baby back to bed sleepy but still awake. This helps babies learn to get themselves back to sleep.

- Start a bedtime routine. Try the 3 Bs: Bath, book, and bed! Do it every night to let your baby know it is time for sleep.
Start good feeding habits now to help your baby learn healthy eating for life.

Babies know when they are hungry and full.

Feeding when your baby is not showing signs of hunger can make it harder for him to know when he is hungry and full. This can lead to eating more than he needs and gaining weight too quickly, both now and as he grows up.

How can I tell if my baby is hungry or full?

**Hungry babies may:**
- Get excited when they see food
- Reach for or point to the spoon or the food
- Open their mouths when they are being fed

**Full babies may:**
- Turn away from food
- Shake their heads
- Not open their mouths

Never force your baby to eat or to finish food.

Worried about your baby’s weight gain? Ask your doctor about it! They will tell you how your baby is growing.
Make family meals part of every day, as often as you can.

- At the table with you, your baby will learn to eat and enjoy meals.
- Let your baby see you eat lots of vegetables and fruits and other healthy foods. Your baby will learn from you!
- Keep screens off at meals. Just talk and focus on each other.

Let your baby try many kinds of vegetables and fruits.

- Eating at this age is about learning to eat and trying new foods. Breast milk or formula is still what babies need most to grow.
- When introducing solid foods, first offer pureed or well mashed foods. Then start to give soft foods or finely chopped foods. Let your baby pick up small pieces of food by herself if she wants.
- Avoid foods that are easy to choke on, like nuts, popcorn, grapes.
- Learning to like a food can take time, so be patient. Babies can try a food 20 times before learning to like it! Mixing a new food with a taste your baby knows, like breast milk or formula can be helpful.
- Frozen and canned vegetables can be a good choice since they don’t spoil. Look for ones with no added salt or sugar.

Help your baby start to drink from a cup.

- Bottles offer comfort, but they also make it easy for babies to drink more than they need. Try a “sippy” cup.

Do not give your baby juice.

- Juice is full of sugar (even 100% juice!) which is not good for your baby’s teeth or body.
- Water is the best drink choice at any age. Help your baby get used to drinking water now by giving small tastes of it with meals.

Do not give your baby cow’s milk.

- Cow’s milk is not safe for babies until they are 1 year old.
Babies and Screens

Babies under 18 months should not have any screen time.

- No screen time means not being in a place to see TVs, computers, tablets, or phones that are being watched.

- Screen time at this age can slow babies learning to talk and read as they get older. It can also add to sleep and attention problems. Your baby learns best from hearing you talk. TV does not help with this. If you like background noise in the house, turn on the radio or a music player.

- If you do video calls (like Skype or FaceTime) with family or friends, it is ok to have your baby do that with you.

Play Time!

Babies need time every day to move and explore.

- Your baby will start to learn to do many new things between 6 and 12 months, like roll, sit, crawl, pull to stand, and then walk! Your baby needs a safe place to move around. Ask your doctor if you want to learn more about what in the home may not be safe for your baby.

- Being active will help your baby learn, get stronger, and be healthy. Avoid having your baby in a seat or crib for long periods of time.

- Give your baby plenty of time to move freely on the floor. The hard surface helps babies learn to crawl and walk.
The Boston Basics are 5 fun, simple, and powerful ways that every family can give every child a great start in life.

1. **Maximize Love, Manage Stress**
   - Babies need to feel loved and safe. Manage your stress to help your baby feel secure.

2. **Talk, Sing, and Point**
   - Point as you talk to give your baby clues to what you are saying.

3. **Count, Group, and Compare**
   - Even babies start to learn math and thinking skills. Your baby will learn by watching you.

4. **Explore Through Movement and Play**
   - Babies learn by touching and exploring. Let your baby touch, bang and crawl to learn the way around.

5. **Read and Discuss Stories**
   - Reading is a great way to bond. Your baby will learn how books work and start to develop language.

Have you started the Boston Basics with your baby? If not, try them today!

The First 1,000 Days is partnering with the Boston Basics. Learn more about the Boston Basics at BostonBasics.org.
Your Baby’s Growth

Today’s Date: ___________

- Weight ___________ pounds
- Length ___________ inches

Weight for length percentile: ______

Feeding, soothing, and sleep goals:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Check out our short videos to learn more about caring for your baby.

Vidscrip.com/First1000Days

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