



# Nine-Month Visit

Congratulations, your baby is 9 months old and becoming much more mobile and independent. The following are some tips to help you along.

## Feeding and Nutrition

- At this age, your baby will take breast milk or formula 3-5 times a day (16-32 oz total). Do not switch to cow's milk until age 1.
- Offer your baby 3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day in a highchair – this prevents unhealthy “grazing” (eating all day) and is better for choking prevention. In general, offer food first, then formula or breast milk. If your baby seems thirsty between feedings, offer water in a sippy cup. Fruit juice is unnecessary at this age and offers no nutritional value.
- Do not force your baby to eat. Some babies may say “no” to a food 10-12 times before they will try it.
- Let your baby feed themselves with their fingers – this is part of the way babies learn about food. Be patient and expect them to make a mess.
- Make sure all food is chopped into bite-sized pieces. Try a variety of foods and textures – at this age, infants can eat almost everything you eat. Avoid foods that may be a choking hazard such as: peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs, whole grapes, raisins, whole beans or hard foods that can be bitten off, such as carrots, celery or raw apple. In general, if you are able to ‘mash’ a food on the roof of your mouth with your tongue, choking risk is low. Do not give honey until after age 1.
- Earlier introduction of more allergenic foods (peanut butter, fish, eggs) can decrease risk of allergy. If you haven't already, start these foods once at a time. Discuss with your doctor first if your baby has eczema or there is a strong family history of food allergies.

## Oral Health



- To help with teething, gently massage your baby's gums or let them chew on a wet towel. Lidocaine gels are not recommended.
- Brush teeth twice a day using a rice grain size amount of fluoride toothpaste on a soft baby toothbrush.
- To prevent tooth decay, never let your baby fall asleep with a bottle. You should brush your baby's teeth AFTER the last feeding of the night.
- Discuss with your doctor if your baby needs extra fluoride.

## Childproofing Your Home Checklist

- ✓ Keep medications, poisons and cleaning supplies locked away and out of your child's reach.
- ✓ Check your floors constantly for small objects a child might swallow, such as coins, buttons, beads, pins, batteries and screws. Keep sharp objects, balloons and plastic bags away from your baby.
- ✓ Place secure gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- ✓ Keep furniture away from windows and place guards on all windows above the 1st floor. Tie window blind cords and drapes up and out of reach.
- ✓ Cover all electric outlets with safety plugs.



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## Safety Tips

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises keeping children in a rear-facing car seat until age 2, or until they reach the highest weight AND height allowed by the maker of their seat. This is the safest position in the event of an accident.
2. Don't put your baby in a seated infant walker that wheels around. These can lead to serious injuries and may delay walking.
3. Babies this age grab at everything. Never leave hot liquids such as coffee or hot soup within reach.
4. Never leave your baby unattended near water, in the bath, on high surfaces or in the car.
5. Avoid direct sun exposure. If not possible, use a wide brimmed hat and broad-spectrum, mineral-based sunscreen.

### Sleeping

- At this age, babies should sleep through the night (9-11 hours) and take 2-3 naps for an average of 13-14 hours of total sleep per day.
- Your baby's crib mattress should be at the lowest setting to prevent falls.
- Using the same bedtime routine helps signal to your baby that it is time to go to sleep. For example, you might dim the lights, play quiet music and read a story or sing the same song each night.
- Allow your baby to take a comfort item/ small blanket (not the bottle!) to bed. Try to put them to bed when they are sleepy but still awake so they learn to fall asleep on their own (without being fed, rocked or held).
- Contact your doctor if you have questions about sleep training.

### Development

- Babies vary greatly in development. At this age, many babies will:
  - 1) Respond to their own name, understand a few words, babble and say mama or dada.
  - 2) Sit well without support, crawl or scoot and possibly "cruise" (take steps holding onto furniture).
  - 3) Inspect, bang and throw/drop objects, wave bye-bye and play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- Try these tips to help with development:
  - 1) Encourage your baby to move around and explore on their own by offering floor time in a baby-proofed area several times a day.
  - 2) Offer toys that allow your child to "fill and dump".
  - 3) Ask "Where?" questions, then point... "There it is!"
  - 4) Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about your baby's development.
- Read with your baby every day! Books with hard cardboard pages and bright pictures are best (don't worry if they put it in their mouth). Screen time (TV/phone/tablet) is NOT recommended for babies – it does not help babies learn and can delay development.

### Stranger Anxiety

Often at 8-9 months, infants will be outgoing and loving with you but anxious and easily frightened around unfamiliar people or things. This is a normal part of infant development and usually improves after 12-15 months.



### Immunizations (\*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

#### Today:

- Hepatitis (variable)
- Influenza (seasonal)
- At the 9 or 12 month visit, your baby will have a blood test to screen for lead exposure and anemia (low red blood count). They may also be screened for tuberculosis.

#### At 12 or 15 months-old:

- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- Varicella
- Hepatitis A
- DTaP
- HIB
- Pneumococcal



### Websites

- AAP Healthy Children | <http://www.healthychildren.org>  
(Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
- AAP Immunization Info | <http://www.aap.org/immunization>  
(Research-based information about childhood vaccines)

Your child's next routine visit is recommended at 12 months

### Behavior/Early Discipline

- Try to use "no!" only when your baby is going to get hurt or hurt others. Tell or show your baby what to do rather than what not to do.
- Use simple discipline. Change what your baby is doing with distraction or offering something else (like a favorite toy).
- Be consistent. Children who know what to expect when they do something won't test limits as much.

### Important Numbers

- Poison Control: 800-222-1222
- Parental Stress Line: 800-632-8188
- HAVEN Domestic Violence Help Line: 617-724-0054
- Smoking Quit Line (free): 800-QUIT-NOW
- Your doctor's office: \_\_\_\_\_