

Things You Should Know: Your Baby 6-11 Months

FEEDING

- Continue breast milk or formula. Do not give regular cow's milk and do not microwave bottles. **Always hold your baby while giving a bottle.** At 9 months begin to wean from the bottle to a regular cup. The goal is to have the baby off the bottle by 12-15 months.
- **Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.** Tooth decay and ear infections can be caused by inappropriate use of a bottle.
- Offer a cup of water once a day.
- **At 6 months your baby should be eating soft foods such as vegetables, fruits, eggs, meats and cereals.** Small tastes of peanut butter should be offered on a spoon or mixed in with other foods. If you are warming food in a microwave, always stir the food to prevent "hot spots."
- **At 9 months of age most babies need 3-4 feedings per day. Provide regular mealtimes and offer a variety of table foods.** Because most babies this age can pick up objects with their thumbs and forefingers (the "pincer grasp"), they can pick up small pieces of food and this makes feeding themselves an enjoyable challenge!
- **Do not give the baby any foods that might easily cause choking such as nuts, popcorn, chips, candy, hotdogs, frozen peas, raw vegetables, grapes and raisins. Do not give your baby honey or corn syrup until the age of 12 months because of the risk of botulism.** With the exception of the above items, they may advance as they want.
- **Babies should be seated in a highchair and watched by an adult at all times while eating.** The infant should not be allowed to play with a mouthful of food. Meals provide opportunities for social interactions as well as for nutrition.
- Breastfed babies and babies drinking less than 32 ounces of formula daily should be given a vitamin D supplement daily.

SLEEP

- Most babies nap twice a day. Separation anxiety may cause the baby to resist going to sleep. A small, special stuffed animal might be helpful.
- Awakening at night is a common problem. If a child this age is put to sleep in a parent's arms or with a pacifier, bottle or breast, the child will require the same parenting to fall back to sleep. For this reason, we have these recommendations:
 - **Follow a regular bedtime routine at the same time each night.**
 - **Put your child in bed awake without a bottle or pacifier.** Do not put the child to sleep by rocking, feeding or other methods. Babies who are put to sleep in this manner will not easily be able to fall back asleep when they wake up at night. A period of quiet time such as rocking, singing or reading is encouraged before bedtime to allow children to relax.
 - **If your baby wakes up at night and does not go back to sleep on his or her own within 15 or 20 minutes, you may go in to check for signs of illness but do not turn on the light, pick up the baby or feed the baby. Let your baby know that it is nighttime and that you will see him or her in the morning. It is okay to let your baby cry. This will not cause harm or emotional problems.**

BEHAVIOR

- Babies often begin to act frightened by strangers at about six months of age. Reassure grandparents that this will soon pass! Parents should not trick the baby or sneak away to keep the baby from crying. Playing peek-a-boo will help. Reassure the child that you will return.

SHOES

- Shoes are only needed to protect the baby from sharp objects and temperature extremes. Shoes should be flexible, inexpensive and have plenty of room in them.

SAFETY

- **ALWAYS put your baby in a car seat. Your child must remain rear facing in the car seat.** See our Car Seat Guidelines handout for further details. Always wear a seat belt yourself.
- **Do not place any heavy bedding, large stuffed animals or pillows in the baby's crib to reduce the risk of suffocation and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).**
- Never leave the baby in a car seat unattended on an elevated surface.
- Necklaces or long cords on pacifiers are dangerous.
- Prevent falls. Use gates on stairwells and install safety devices on windows and screens.
- Sharp objects such as knives, scissors, tools, razor blades and other hazardous items such as coins, glass objects, beads, pins and older siblings' small toys should be kept away from the baby's reach.
- Do not hold the baby while drinking hot liquids or smoking.
- Keep all medicines and cleaning supplies up and out of reach.
- Guns in the home are a danger to the family. If a gun is kept in the home, the gun and the ammunition should be stored in separate locations.
- Be sure you have working smoke alarms as well as a simple fire safety plan, like where the family might meet outside in case of a fire.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended.
- Babies can easily suffocate if left lying on a soft surface.
- Check the temperature of your hot water heater. It should be below 120 °F.
- The number for Poison Control **1-800-366-8888** should be kept near your phone in a place that you can find easily.
- **We do not recommend the use of walkers.** Walkers may delay your child's ability to walk and may cause your child to walk on tip toes. Walkers are also dangerous. There are over 9,000 walker-related injuries a year.
- **Lower the crib mattress** and take down all mobiles from the crib.
- Electrical sockets should be plugged.
- Be sure there are no tablecloths, lamps, drawers and dangling electrical cords that the baby could pull down while pulling up and attempting to stand.
- **Protect your baby's skin from the sun with a hat and clothing and a sunscreen approved for babies 6 months and older. Use a sunscreen that is "broad spectrum" with at least an SPF of 15. Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside.**
- **Exposure to cigarette smoke causes many medical problems for your baby. These include upper respiratory infections (colds), asthma, ear infections and an increased**

risk of SIDS. E-cigarettes, vaping and marijuana use can also cause harmful effects to your baby.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Read to your baby every day.**
- **Talk to your baby often.** When your baby babbles, talk back as if you both understand every word. These early conversations will teach your baby hundreds of words before your baby can actually speak any of them.
- **Play with your baby on the floor every day.** Hold brightly colored toys within reach. Introduce one toy at a time so your baby can focus on and explore each one. Good choices include a small rattle with a handle, a rubber ring, a soft doll, soft balls or blocks, stacking cups or board books with pictures.
- Place your baby in different positions - on the back, stomach and sitting with support. Each position gives your baby a different view and a chance to move and explore in different ways.
- Let your baby play with your fingers and explore the bottle or breast during feedings. Later let your baby handle finger foods and help hold the spoon.

TEETHING

- To help make your baby more comfortable while teething, use teething rings. Do not use numbing gels such as Orajel. These products can numb the gag reflex and cause choking.
- **When teeth come in, brush them twice a day with a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste.**
- **Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle as this can cause tooth decay.**

DIAPER RASH

- Diaper rashes are usually caused by being left in wet or dirty diapers too long. When rash appears, change diapers more often and apply Desitin, Vaseline, A&D ointment or other diaper creams as needed.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL CHILD VISITS

- We would like to see your baby in the office at 9 and 12 months for well child visits.
- At the 6 month check up your baby will receive the following vaccines: DTaP, Hib, Prevnar, Hepatitis B and Rotavirus.
- At the 9 month check up your baby will receive the Polio vaccine.
- At the 12 month check up your baby will receive the following vaccines: MMR, chicken pox and Hepatitis A. At this visit your baby will also be checked for lead and anemia.
- Protection from RSV, a potentially serious respiratory infection, is available through an antibody injection for infants under 8 months whose mothers did not receive the RSV vaccine during pregnancy.
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for all infants 6 months and older.
- Call the office immediately if your baby appears to develop a severe reaction after shots are given. If fever lasts longer than 2-3 days, call us.

Please do not hesitate to call or text our office if you have any questions or concerns!