

Well Check: 9 months

Your baby may be starting to crawl, walk when holding onto furniture, and explore the home on their own. Make sure your home, and other homes visited, are “baby proof.”

Feeding your baby

Babies may want to start feeding themselves now. The mess they make is a sign of their growing independence.

- **Give your baby finger foods, and let them try to feed themselves.** Help your baby learn to use a cup.
- **Give your baby 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks a day.** Your baby may eat more some days than others.
- **Keep feeding with breast milk or formula.** Wait until your baby is at least 12 months old before giving cow’s milk.
- **Start feeding more table foods.**
 - Offer only healthy foods. Avoid giving junk food or foods with much added sugar.
 - Give foods with different textures and colors.
 - Babies may refuse a food several times before they want to try it. Don’t force your baby to eat a particular food, but do try it again in a few days.



At 9 months old, most babies:

- Sit without help, crawl, and can stand when holding onto something
- Look for things they see you hide
- Understand “no”
- Are starting to make consonant sounds, like “mamama” and “bababa”
- Move things from one hand to the other
- Are sometimes shy or afraid of strangers

Babies reach milestones at their own pace. For detailed information about milestones, visit [cdc.gov/actearly](https://www.cdc.gov/actearly), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Keeping your baby safe and well

- **Be safe in the car.**
 - Keep your baby in a rear-facing car seat in the middle back seat until your child is 2 years old. Never put your baby’s car seat in a seat with an air bag.
 - **Don’t drive distracted.** Never drink, use drugs, text, or use the phone while driving. If your baby distracts you, pull over.
 - **Never leave your baby alone in a car.**
- **Build habits for healthy teeth.**
 - If your baby has teeth, clean them with a soft cloth or toothbrush and water.
 - Have regular feeding times. Avoid giving your baby a bottle in bed.
 - Ask your doctor about fluoride.
- **Make sure your baby gets recommended immunizations on schedule.**

- **Be safe at home and other places.**
 - As your baby learns to push up on their legs, they may want to climb the stairs. Be sure to put a gate at the top and bottom of stairs.
 - Protect your baby from choking. Be extra careful about buttons, plastic bags, toys with small parts, and other small objects.
 - Lock up poisons and cleaning supplies. When in the kitchen, put your baby in a high chair or playpen.
 - Cover electric outlets with plastic plugs, and keep electric cords out of reach.
 - Never leave your baby alone near water or in the bath, not even for a second. Always empty play pools after use.

Helping your child grow

- **Help your baby communicate.**
 - Show and tell your baby in simple words what you want them to do. If your baby is getting into trouble, gently direct them to another activity instead of scolding.
 - Try to talk more about what you do want your baby to do (“put the food in your mouth”), rather than what you don’t want them to do (“stop throwing the food on the floor.”)
 - For the next few months, your baby may cry when you leave, and be afraid of other people, even grandma. When approaching other people, let your baby make the first move.
- **Make plenty of time for active play.**
 - Avoid the TV and other screens. Let your baby play with stacking toys, blocks, and balls. Give them a wooden spoon and a pan to bang it on.
 - Play turn-taking games with your baby. Make funny noises or funny faces, and let your baby make them back. Pass a toy back and forth.
 - Read to your baby, look at picture books together, and give your baby small board books to hold.
- **Help your baby learn good sleep habits.**
 - Create a calming bedtime routine that will help your baby prepare for sleep.
 - Lay your baby down when sleepy but still awake.
 - If your baby wakes in the night, check on them and try to calm them without picking them up.
 - Most babies this age need 12 to 16 hours of sleep a day (including 2 naps).



Follow-up appointment

Your next well-child visit will be when your baby is 12 months old.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Here are some helpful resources in the meantime:



IntermountainMoms Facebook page



For more age-appropriate safety information, visit safekids.org and sign up for the monthly newsletter



If you need help with housing, food, or if you feel unsafe at home, call 2-1-1, or visit 211ut.org for community services



When should I call?

If you think your baby may have eaten poisons, medicines, or cleaning supplies, call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

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