Well Check: 9 months

Your baby may be starting to crawl, walk when holding onto furniture, and may want to explore the house on her own. Make sure your house — and other houses he visits — are baby proof.

Feeding your baby

Your baby may want to start feeding herself now. The mess she makes is sign of her growing independence. Let her try — just be ready with the cleanup rag!

- Give your baby finger foods and let her try to feed herself. 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 breast milk or formula. Don't give your baby cow's milk or honey until she's 12 months old.
- Start feeding more table foods.
  - Give only healthy foods. Don't give junk food.
  - Give foods with different textures and colors.
  - Babies may refuse a food several times before they are willing to try it. Don't force your baby to eat a particular food, but do try it again in a few days.

Keeping your baby safe and well

- **Make sure your baby gets the recommended immunizations.**
- **Build habits for healthy teeth**
  - If your baby has teeth, clean them with a soft cloth or toothbrush and water.
  - Have regular feeding times. Don't let your baby keep eating all day long. Don't give your baby a bottle in bed. Don't put juice in the bottle.
  - If you haven't already, talk with your doctor about fluoride.
- **Be safe in your home and other places**
  - As your baby learns to push up on her legs, she may want to climb the stairs. Be sure to put a gate at the top and bottom of the stairs.
  - Protect your baby from choking. Be extra careful about buttons, plastic bags, toys with small parts, and other hazards.
  - Lock up poisons and cleaning supplies. When in the kitchen, put your baby in a high chair or play pen.
  - 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.

MILESTONES At 9 months old, most babies:

- Sit without help, crawl, and can stand when holding onto something.
- Look for things they see you hide, play peek-a-boo.
- Understand "no."
- Are starting to make consonant sounds, like "mamama" and "bababa."
- Move things smoothly from one hand to the other.
- May be afraid of strangers.

Your baby will reach milestones at her own pace. For detailed information about milestones, visit www.cdc.gov/actearly, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

- **Be safe in the car**
  - Keep your baby's car seat facing the back of the car until your child is 2 years old. Keep the car seat in the back seat of the car.
  - Never text or use the phone while driving.

Helping your child grow

- **Help your baby communicate**
  - Show and tell your baby in simple words what you want him to do. If your baby is getting into trouble, gently direct him to another activity. Don't scold your baby.
  - Try to talk more about what you *do* want your baby to do ("put the food in your mouth"), instead of what you *don't* want him 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 him 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 books and look at picture books together. 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 he's sleepy but still awake.
  - If your baby wakes in the night, check on him and try to calm him without picking him up.
  - Most babies this age need about 14 hours of sleep a day, including 2 naps.

When to call:

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

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

NOTES:

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Note: This is general information that applies to most families. If your doctor tells you something different, follow what your doctor says.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

IntermountainMoms Facebook page

If you need help in other areas of your life (such as rent, violence, or a job), call 2-1-1, or visit 211ut.org for community resources.

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