



# 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 after 1 year.
- Offer your baby 3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day **in a high chair** – this prevents unhealthy “grazing” (eating all day) and is better for choking prevention. In general, offer food first then formula or breast milk.
- 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 himself with his fingers – this is part of the way babies learn about food. Be patient and expect him to make a mess.
- Make sure all food is chopped into bite-sized pieces. Experiment with a variety of foods and textures – at this age, he 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.
- If there is a strong family history of food allergies, discuss with your doctor when to introduce specific foods. Remember not to give your baby honey until after age 1.
- Fruit juice is unnecessary at this age and offers no nutritional value. Giving only breast milk or formula and water is best. If your child seems thirsty between feedings, offer water in a sippy cup.

## Safety Tips

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics now advises keeping children in a rear-facing 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 an infant walker at *any* age. 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 a child unattended near water, in the bath, on high surfaces, or in the car.
5. Avoid direct sun exposure. If not possible, use a large brimmed hat and sunscreen SPF 45 or higher.




## Oral Health

To help with teething, gently massage your baby's gums or let him chew on a wet towel.

- Brush teeth twice a day using water on a soft baby toothbrush or wipe teeth with a washcloth.
- To prevent tooth decay, never let your baby fall asleep with a bottle. You should brush your baby's teeth **AFTER** the last milk 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.
- ✓ Place screens around wood stoves and heaters to prevent burns.
- ✓ Empty buckets, kiddie pools and tubs right after use.
- ✓ Secure TVs and bookcases to the wall and guard sharp edges on furniture.
- ✓ Turn your hot water heater down to 120° or lower to avoid burns.
- ✓ Certain houseplants may be harmful – check with Poison Control if you aren't sure.
- ✓ Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and change batteries yearly.
- ✓ If you have a gun, lock it away and store ammunition in a different place.

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### 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.
- As your infant gets older, going to bed can become more and more difficult especially if there are older siblings who are still awake. Sticking to a bedtime routine helps to 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 child to take a comfort item/ small blanket (not the bottle!) to bed.
- Contact your doctor if you have questions about sleep training.

### 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:                   | -At the 9 or 12 month visit,  |
| -Hepatitis B (variable)  | your child will have a blood  |
| At 12 or 15 months-old): | test to screen for lead       |
| -MMR (measles, mumps     | poisoning and anemia (low     |
| and rubella)             | red blood count). He may also |
| -Varicella               | be screened for tuberculosis. |
| -Hepatitis A             |                               |
| -DTaP/HIB combined       | -Influenza vaccine is advised |
| -Pneumococcal            | during flu season.            |

### 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)

### 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 his 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 he puts it in his mouth). TV is NOT recommended for babies – it does not help babies learn and will delay development.

### Behavior/Early Discipline

- Babies are becoming more independent at this age.
- Use simple discipline like changing what your baby is doing with distraction or offering something else like playing with 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  
1-800-222-1222
- Parental Stress Line  
1-800-632-8188
- HAVEN Domestic Violence Help Line  
1-617-724-0054
- Smoking Quit Line (free):  
1-800-TRY TO STOP
- Your doctor's office

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