



Six Month Preventive Exam

Development

6-month-olds like and need to interact with people. They engage in reciprocal and face-to-face play. These reciprocal interactions help develop a sense of trust. They prefer interacting with familiar adults. Your baby should be starting to use hard consonant sounds like “ba”, “ga”, or “da”. He should now be able to maintain a sitting position, at least briefly. He should be transferring toys from hand to hand, playing with his feet and maybe even putting his feet into his mouth. Using consonant sounds is referred to as babbling, and is a good sign that your child is hearing. Soon, your baby should be starting to crawl and pulling up to stand on furniture. Avoid baby walkers because they are unsafe. Babies may seem interested in mobile devices and TV’s, but mostly because they are attracted to the lights and sounds as well as being interested in what their caregivers are paying attention to. Research shows that babies cannot learn information from screens. They learn from interacting with caregivers; being read, talked, and sung to; and exploring their environment by grabbing, mouthing, crawling, and cruising. Place your baby in the crib when drowsy, but not asleep. This will help him to learn to sleep on his own.

Diet

Your child may now have 2–3 meals a day. The next few months are a good time to expand her taste horizons by giving new foods and textures. She should be able to handle eating meats, even without teeth. Increase the variety of your baby’s diet as quickly as she will let you. Research has shown that adding peanut products to her diet at this age (like mixing some peanut butter or peanut powder into some food) can decrease the risk of developing peanut allergy. By nine months, your child can be starting with small finger foods that are not choking hazards. Your baby will turn her head when she is finished eating; please follow this cue. Give breast milk or formula between meals (3 or 4 times a day) at least until one year of age. Breast fed babies should still be on a vitamin D supplement or vitamin D + iron until taking in an iron & zinc-rich diet. You may introduce water with meals. Start to introduce sippy cups, no spill cups, and straw cups so she can get off the bottle at 1 year.

Oral health

Even if your child does not have teeth yet, clean his mouth (gums, tongue, cheeks) twice a day. Use a soft cloth or soft finger-brush with water to gently clean your baby’s gums and any teeth that have erupted. All infants need a source of fluoride at 6 months. If your water does not contain fluoride use a smear of fluoridated toothpaste, no larger than a grain of rice. To avoid developing a habit that will harm your baby’s teeth do not put the bottle in your baby’s bed or prop it into his mouth. Avoid baby foods or juices that babies have to suck out of a bag or pouch as your baby’s teeth or gums will be in contact with pureed food longer than necessary; which can lead to tooth decay. Avoid sharing a spoon with him or putting his pacifier in your mouth because it introduces your own bacteria into your baby’s mouth, which can also contribute to tooth decay.

Safety

Keep baby powder, household cleaners, tide pods, and E-Cigarettes out of reach as accidental ingestions and aspirations may occur. Nicotine cartridges from e-cigarettes are

especially dangerous. Keep firearms locked up with ammunition stored separately. Avoid baby walkers and Bumbo sitters. It's important to keep your car, home, and other places where your baby spends time free of tobacco smoke and E-cigarette vapor. Smoking affects the baby by increasing the risk of asthma, respiratory infections, and sudden death.

When asleep, your baby should be on her back, not on her tummy or side. Sleeping on the tummy or side has been proven to be a risk factor for SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). Click here for the [SIDS page](#) in the parent information section of our website for more information. Once your baby is rolling she should no longer be swaddled. If your baby rolls during sleep on her own, it is not necessary to return her to her back. The crib mattress should be moved to its lowest point before your baby learns to stand.

Remember to use an approved, rear-facing infant car seat whenever you're driving with your baby. Never leave your child alone in the car for any reason, even briefly. Now is a good time to make sure your house is child-proofed. Install electrical outlet guards, place safety gates at the top & bottom of stairs, bolt down furniture as needed, and install child-proof latches. Move dangerous chemicals such as those found in drain cleaners and dish-washing detergents out of your baby's reach. Some house plants are poisonous, so move them up high, too. If your child ingests anything potentially poisonous, **call Poison Control at 800-222-1222**. Keep this number by your phone. Sun exposure should be limited at any age, but a baby's skin can be especially sensitive. When outside, protective clothing should be worn and sunscreen should be applied. Click here for a [sunscreen](#) page in the parent information section of our website for more information.

Family Relationships & Support

Many parents feel tired or overwhelmed, but these feelings should not continue. If you find you are still feeling tired, overwhelmed, using over the counter or prescription medications, drugs, or alcohol to feel better please let your partner, your health provider, or us know so that you can get the help you need. If you are home with your infant and you are not getting out, you may want to join a playgroup or invite other parents with babies over for a playdate.

What to expect at this visit

A developmental screen should be completed before the visit. Immunizations given at this visit include: Pentacel (DTaP-Polio-Hib combination), Prevnar13 (Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine), and Rotavirus. Flu vaccine maybe given at this visit, if in season. Fever, fussiness, drowsiness, decreased appetite, redness, swelling (sometimes in the form of a sore lump) at one of the injection sites may occur for 24 to 48 hours after the vaccines. The lump may persist for weeks following vaccination and will resolve with time. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed. See our [Medication Dosing Guide](#) for recommended dosing. Please call if a more severe reaction occurs (Fever of 105, convulsions, collapse, inconsolable for more than 3 hrs).

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