



Nine Month Preventive Exam

Development

Your child should be able to stand holding onto furniture and to crawl. Many 9-month-olds are pulling up to stand, and some are taking steps holding onto furniture (cruising). Give your baby opportunities to explore safely. Your child should be picking up small objects with her finger and thumb, babbling (using “dada” and “mama”, but not necessarily specifically for you), and playing games such as peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, or waving bye-bye with you. It’s a good age to talk a lot to your child, to sing, and to read to her. You may even teach some simple sign language skills that will help her better communicate in the upcoming months. These interactions give your child a good speech model and encourages language development. Play cause-and-effect games such as rolling balls back and forth, pushing toy cars & trucks, and placing blocks into a container that can be dumped out. Avoid using the television as “background noise” or as “something for your child to look at.” She is better stimulated with human interactions. Your child will likely show separation anxiety from you and other caregivers. This is a good sign of a strong attachment and development of interpersonal relationships.

At around 9 months, it is not unusual for infants who have been sleeping through the night to begin to awaken. This is an age where bedtime routines that help your baby relax and get ready for sleep are especially important. If your baby is waking up in the night, continue to check on your baby and settle your baby back to sleep without picking her up or rocking her. This will allow her to learn to fall back asleep by herself.

During the first year of life, parents’ primary role is to balance stimulating an infant’s natural curiosity and protecting her from harm. Babies learn more by example from what they observe more than from what parents say. Use positive language to describe behaviors you desire as much as possible, such as “time to sit” and “don’t stand.” Try to limit the use of “no” except in dangerous situations. Use redirection or distraction and put forbidden objects out of reach of your child.

Diet

If you haven't started with finger foods, now is probably the time. Start with soft food such as pieces of banana or mashed potatoes. As long as your child isn't having trouble with excessive gagging, try macaroni, rice, cheerios, pieces of bread, peas and carrots that are cooked so they're soft, and pieces of soft fruit, such as pears and peaches. Peel the skin off and cut them into bite-sized pieces. Put only a few pieces of food at a time on his plate. Some kids will prefer finger foods; others will do better with baby foods. Either or some of both is fine for now. If you haven't yet, you can also start meats. You can try finger food meats, such as crumbled ground beef or chicken or small pieces of shredded deli meats, or you can use jarred meat and vegetable combination dinners. Tiny pieces of chicken or fish from your plate are also fine. Other good foods include eggs and dairy products (as long as there is not an allergy). Appropriate dairy products include yogurt (Greek or regular), pieces of cheese, or cottage cheese. You may start to give him the same types of food you might have for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Try to provide a well-rounded diet, with foods from each food group every day.

Honey should be avoided until one year of age, as it can cause botulism in infants. Wait for cow's milk itself until 1 year of age (as noted above, other dairy is fine). Breast fed babies should still be on a vitamin D supplement and his diet should be high in iron & zinc.

Oral health

Even if your child does not have teeth yet, clean her mouth (gums, tongue, cheeks and teeth) 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 with teeth need a source of fluoride so use a smear of fluoridated toothpaste, no larger than a grain of rice. 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 utensils with her or putting her pacifier in your mouth because it introduces your own bacteria into your baby's mouth, which can also contribute to tooth decay. If you haven't already, now is the time to introduce a sippy cup, straw cups, or no spill cups so that the bottle can be discontinued by her first birthday.

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. 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.

Your baby should be placed on his back to sleep, not on his tummy or side. Continue to keep bumpers, pillows, and other items out of the crib to prevent suffocation if he rolls over and so he cannot use these items as steps to climb out of the crib. The crib mattress should be moved to its lowest point before your baby learns to stand. Click here for the [SIDS page](#) in the parent information section of our website for more information.

Use an approved, rear-facing car seat. Your child may have outgrown the infant rear facing seats and you can transition to a convertible or 3-in-1 car seat approved for rear facing to higher weights and heights. Your child will be the safest if rear facing until he outgrows the manufacturer limits (for height/weight) of the car seat, which should be beyond 2 years old. Your own safe driving behaviors are important as well. Use a seat belt, do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and do not text or use mobile devices while driving.

Now is a good time to make sure your house is child-proofed if you have not already done so. Install electrical outlet guards, place safety gates at the top and 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 phone 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.

What to expect at this visit

A developmental screen should be completed before the visit. Hearing and vision screens will be completed at the visit. Flu immunization is given at this visit if in season. See our [Medication Dosing Guide](#) for recommended dosing of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

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