

Well Child Care at 9 Months

Feeding

Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Most babies now take 6 to 8 ounces of formula 4 times a day. Encourage your child to drink formula and juice from a cup now.

If you haven't already, you can begin adding meat to your child's diet.

By now, many children have 2 or more teeth. After meals and before bedtime, try to wash off the teeth with a clean cloth.

Development and Behavior

Babies are starting to pull themselves up to stand. They love to bang things together to make sounds. They may start to say "dada" and "mama."

At this age, babies learn what "no" means. Say "no" calmly and firmly and either take away the item that your child should not be playing with or remove him from the situation. If your child continues to do what you told him not to do, you can put your baby in a playpen for 1 minute without any toys or attention from you. It is a good idea to be both gentle and firmly in control.

Give your baby a choice of toys. Talk to him about the toy he chooses and what he is doing with the toy. Give lots of kisses and hugs. Peek-a-boo is a favorite game.

9-month-olds have a lot of energy and it requires a lot of energy to take care of them. Make sure you get enough rest. Ask friends and family for help so you can take a break and rest. If you are rested, you will be better able to take care of your child.

Sleep

A regular bedtime hour and routine are important. Babies enjoy looking at picture books. You may want to read one regularly with your child. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal may help your baby feel secure at bedtime. If your baby wakes up a lot at night, ask your doctor or nurse for advice.

Normal Development: 9 Months Old

Here's what you might see your baby doing between the ages of 9 and 12 months.

Daily Activities

- Continues to enjoy banging, waving, and throwing toys.
- Scrutinizes toys and other objects.
- Becomes absorbed in toys and games.
- Explores food with fingers.
- Initiates play.

Motor Skills

- Goes from sitting to lying position unassisted.
- May pull self to standing position.
- Stands holding on to furniture.
- Tries to move one foot in front of the other when held upright.
- May try to crawl up stairs.
- May begin to walk with assistance.

Language Development

- Imitates the rising and falling sounds of adult conversation.
- Imitates more speech sounds, but does not yet understand them.
- Repeats sounds again and again.
- May begin to say "mama" or "dada" appropriately.

Reading tips

- Play frequently with your baby. Talk, sing, recite rhymes, and do finger plays. This helps your baby learn spoken language and builds a strong foundation for reading.
- Talk with your baby, making eye contact. Allow time for your baby to respond before moving on to the next idea.
- Give your baby board books or soft books to look at, chew on, or bang on the table.
- Look at picture books with your baby and name the objects that he sees. Say things like "See the baby!" or "Look at the puppy!"
- Snuggle with your baby on your lap and read aloud to him. He may not understand the story, but he will love to hear the sound of your voice and the rhythm of the language.

Emotional and Behavioral Development

- Continues to resist doing what does not want to do.
- Begins trying to imitate some parent behaviors.
- Loves showing off for family audience.
- May cry when parent leaves the room.
- May resist diapering.

Safety Tips

Car Seat Safety

If your child reaches 20 pounds and is still riding in an infant seat, it is time for a new car seat. Some car seats can convert from a backward-facing infant seat to a forward-facing toddler seat. Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing new or converting old car seats for your child. For more information you can call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-800-424-9393.

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Avoid foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts).
- Cut food into small pieces.
- Store toys in a chest without a dropping lid.

Prevent Drowning

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone .NEVER.
- Continuously supervise your baby around any water, including toilets and buckets. Infants can drown in a bucket that has water in it. Empty all water and store buckets turned over.

Avoid Falls

- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.
- Don't underestimate your child's ability to climb.

Prevent Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and gardening chemicals locked away or disposed of safely.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- Keep the poison center number on all phones. The poison control number is
- Do not use syrup of Ipecac.

Avoid Cuts

- Remove or pad furniture with sharp corners.
- Keep sharp objects out of reach.

Fire Safety and Burn Prevention

Fires and burns cause more than 4,000 deaths and more than 50,000 hospitalizations every year. Winter is an especially dangerous time, as space heaters, fireplaces, and candles get more use in the home. It is no surprise that most fires in the home occur between December and February. However, you might be surprised at how easy it is to reduce the risk of fire in your home. Follow these suggestions to keep your home and family safe from fire all year round.

First aid for burns

For severe burns, immediately call 911 or your local emergency number. Until help arrives, follow these steps

1. **Cool the burn.** For 1st and 2nd degree burns, cool the burned area with cool running water for 10 minutes. This helps stop the burning process, numbs the pain, and prevents or reduces swelling. *Do not use ice on a burn. It may delay healing. Also, do not rub a burn, it can increase blistering.* For 3rd degree burns, cool the burn with wet, sterile dressings until help arrives.
2. **Remove burned clothing.** Lay the person flat on her back and take off the burned clothing that isn't stuck to the skin. Remove any jewelry or tight-fitting clothing from around the burned area before swelling begins. If possible, elevate the injured area.
3. **Cover the burn.** After the burn has cooled, apply a clean, dry gauze pad to the burned area. Do not break any blisters. This could allow germs into the wound. *Never put grease (including butter or medical ointments) on the burn. Grease holds in heat, which may make the burn worse.*
4. **Treat for shock.** Keep the person's body temperature normal. Cover unburned areas with a dry blanket.

Different degrees of burns

Following are the four different levels of burns and the symptoms of each:

- **1st degree burns are minor and heal quickly.** Symptoms are redness, tenderness, and soreness (like most sunburns).
- **2nd degree burns are serious injuries.** First aid and medical treatment should be given as soon as possible. Symptoms are blistering (like a severe sunburn), pain, and swelling.
- **3rd degree burns are severe injuries.** Medical treatment is needed right away. Symptoms are white, brown, or charred tissue often surrounded by blistered areas. There may be little or no pain at first.
- ◆ Deep 2nd and 3rd degree burns are called *full-thickness burns* and are very serious.
- **4th degree burns are severe injuries that involve both skin and underlying structures, such as muscle and bone.** These often occur with electrical burns and may be more severe than they appear. They may cause serious complications and should be seen by a doctor immediately.

Remember to call your doctor if your child suffers anything more than a minor burn. ALL electrical burns and any burn on the hand, foot, face, or genitals should receive medical attention right away.

Fire drills – be prepared!

Even preschool-aged children (3 and older) can begin to learn what to do in case of a fire.

1. **Install at least one smoke alarm** on every level of your home.
2. **Have an escape plan** and practice it with your family. This will help you and your family reach safety when it counts. When a fire occurs, there will be no time for planning an escape.
3. **Draw a floor plan of your home.** Discuss with your family two ways to exit every room. Make sure everyone knows how to get out and that doors and windows can be easily opened. If you live in an apartment building, never use an elevator during a fire. Use the stairs!
4. **Agree on a meeting place.** Choose a spot outside your home near a tree, street corner, fence, or mailbox where everyone can gather after escaping. Teach your children that the sound of a smoke alarm means to go outside right away and meet at the designated place.
5. **Know how to call the fire department.** The fire department should be called from outside using a portable phone or from a neighbor's home. Whether the number is 911 or a regular phone number, everyone in the family should know it by heart. Make sure your children know your home address too. Teach your children that firefighters are friends and never to hide from them.
6. **Practice, practice, practice.** Practice your exit drill at least twice a year. Remember that fire drills are not a race. Get out quickly, but calmly and carefully. Try practicing realistic situations. Pretend that some exits or doorways are blocked or that the lights are out. The more prepared your family is, the better your chances of surviving a fire.

Note: Parents of children with special needs should consider a safety plan that fits their child's needs and abilities. For example, a child who is hard-of-hearing or deaf may need a smoke alarm with a flashing strobe-light feature.

Smoke alarms save lives

Most fatal fires in the home happen while people are sleeping. One of the most important steps you can take to protect your family against fire is to install smoke alarms and keep them in good working order. Smoke alarms are available at most home and hardware stores and often cost \$10 or less. Check with your fire department to see if they give out and install free smoke alarms.

- Install smoke alarms outside every bedroom or any area where someone sleeps. Be sure there is at least one alarm on every level of your home or at each end of a mobile home.
- Place smoke alarms away from the Kitchen and bathroom. False alarms can occur while cooking or even showering.
- Test smoke alarms every month by pushing the test button.
- Change the batteries when they get low, or at least once a year such as when you change your clocks back in the fall.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Never paint a smoke alarm.
- Clean smoke alarms monthly by dusting or vacuuming.
- Smoke alarms with a flashing light and an alarm should be used in homes with hard-of-hearing or deaf children or adults.

Prevention around the home

Take a careful look at each room of your home. Use the following checklists and safety tips to reduce the risk of fire:

- Inspect and replace any electrical cords that are worn, frayed, or damaged.
- Never overload outlets.
- Avoid running electrical cords under carpet or furniture as they can overheat and start a fire.
- Make sure doors and windows are easy to open.
- Automatic home fire sprinkler systems are affordable and practical for many homes.
- Avoid using alternative heating sources such as kerosene heaters and electric space heaters. If they must be used, keep them away from clothing, bedding, and curtains, and unplug them at night. If kerosene heaters must be used, make sure there is adequate ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.

Bedrooms

- Check the labels of your child's pajamas. Children should always wear flame retardant and/or close-fitting sleepwear.
- If a bedroom is on an upper floor, make sure there is a safe way to reach the ground, such as a noncombustible escape ladder.
- ◆ *Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy or have been drinking. Tobacco and smoking products, matches, and lighters are the most common cause of fatal fires in the home.*

Living and family rooms

- Make sure all matches, lighters, and ashtrays are out of your child's sight and reach. Better yet, keep them in a locked cabinet.
- Use large, deep ashtrays that won't tip over, and empty them often. Fill ashtrays with water before dumping ashes in the wastebasket.
- Give space heaters plenty of space. Keep heaters *at least 3 feet* from anything that might burn, keep clothes, curtains, and furniture. Always turn space heaters off and unplug them when you go to bed or leave the home.
- Have fireplaces and chimneys cleaned and inspected once a year. Use a metal screen or glass doors in front of the fireplace.
- ◆ *Never leave children alone in a room with candles, heaters, or with a burning fireplace.*

Kitchen

- Keep your stove and oven clean and free of anything that could catch fire. Do not place pot holders, curtains, or towels near the burners.
- Use back burners if possible. When using front burners, turn pot handles inward. Never let them stick out where a child could grab them.
- Install a portable fire extinguisher in the kitchen, high on a wall, and near an exit. (Choose a multipurpose, dry chemical extinguisher). Adults should know how to use it properly when the fire is small and contained, such as in a trashcan. Call your fire department for information on how to use fire extinguishers.
- Do not leave spoons or other utensils in pots while cooking.
- Check food temperatures carefully, especially if foods have been heated in a microwave oven.
- Keep hot foods and liquids out of reach.
- Turn off burners and ovens when they are not being used.
- Do not use wet potholders, as they may cause steam burns.
- Carefully place wet foods into a deep fryer or frying pan containing grease rather than tossing them in. The reaction between hot oil and water will splatter.
- Remove pot lids carefully to avoid being burned by steam. Remember that steam is hotter than boiling water.
- In case of a small pan fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, turn off the burner, and wait for the pan to cool completely.
- Never carry your child and hot liquids at the same time.
- Never hold your child while working over the stove.
- Never leave hot liquids, like a cup of coffee, where children can reach them. Don't forget that a child can get burned from hot liquids by pulling on hanging tablecloths.
- Wear tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when cooking to reduce the risk of your clothes catching on fire.
- In microwave ovens, use only containers that are made for microwaves. Test microwaved food for heat and steam before giving it to your child. (Never warm a bottle in the microwave. It can heat the liquid unevenly and burn your child.)
- Avoid letting appliance cords hang over the side of countertops, where children could pull on them.
- A safe place for your child while you are cooking, eating, or unable to provide your full attention is the playpen, high chair, or crib.
- ◆ *Never leave cooking food unattended*
- ◆ *Never pour water on a grease fire.*
- ◆ *If a fire starts in your oven, keep the oven door closed and call the fire department.*

Hot water

- Lower the thermostat on your water heater so that the temperature at the tap is less than 120F to prevent scalding.
- When using tap water, always turn on the cold water first, then add hot. When finished, turn off the hot water first.
- Test the temperature of bath water with your forearm or the back of your hand before placing your child in the water.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer to treat upper-respiratory illnesses, as hot water vaporizers can cause steam burns or can spill on your child.
- Never leave children alone in the bathroom for any reason. They are at risk of burns and drowning.

Garage and storage area

- Have your furnace inspected at least once a year.
- Do not store anything near a heater or furnace. Remove trash from the home. Clean your dryer vent after every use. Lint buildup can start a fire. Check to make sure paint and other flammable liquids are stored in their original containers, with tight-fitting lids. Store them in a locked cabinet if possible, out of your child's reach, and away from appliances, heaters, pilot lights, and other sources of heat or flame.
- Never use flammable liquids near a gas water heater.
- Store gasoline, propane, and kerosene outside the home in a shed or detached garage. Keep them tightly sealed and labeled in approved safety containers.
- ◆ *Gasoline should be used only as a motor fuel, never as a cleaning agent.*
- ◆ *Never smoke near flammable liquids.*

Outdoors

- Move barbecue grills away from trees, bushes, shrubs, or anything that could catch fire. *Never use grills indoors, on a porch, or on a balcony.*
- Place a barrier around open fires, fire pits, or campfires. *Never leave a child alone around the fire.* Always be sure to put the fire out completely before leaving or going to sleep.
- ◆ *Do not start lawnmowers or motorcycles near gasoline fumes. Let small motors cool off before adding fuel.*
- ◆ *Be very careful with barbecue grills. Never use gasoline to start the fire. Do not add charcoal lighter fluid once the fire has started.*

Know what to do in a fire

- **If smoke or flames trap you,** close all doors. Stuff towels or clothing under the doors to keep out smoke. Cover your nose and mouth with a damp cloth to protect your lungs. If there is no phone in the room, wait at a window and signal for help with a light-colored cloth or flashlight.
- **Test any closed doors with the back of your hand for heat.** Do not open the door if you feel heat or see smoke. Close all doors as you leave each room to keep the fire from spreading.
- **Crawl low under smoke.** Choose the safest exit. If you must escape through a smoky area, remember that cleaner air is always near the floor. Teach your child to crawl on her hands and knees, keeping her head less than 2 feet above the floor, as she makes her way to the nearest exit.
- **Don't stop. Don't go back.** In case of fire, don't try to rescue pets or possessions. Once you are out, do not go back in for any reason. Firefighters have the best chance of rescuing people who are trapped. Let firefighters know right away if anyone is missing.
- **Stop, drop, and roll! Cool and call.** Make sure your child knows what to do if his clothes catch fire.
 - Stop!* Do not run.
 - Drop!* — Drop to the ground right where you are.
 - Roll!* — Roll over and over to put out the flames. Cover your face with your hands.
 - Cool!* — Cool the burned area with water.
 - Call!* — Call for help.

For your sitters

When you are away from home and someone else cares for your children take the following steps to ensure that your children and the sitter will be just as safe as when you are there.

- Let your sitter know where the safest exits are from your home. Discuss the family's escape plan.
- Tell the sitter where the outside meeting place is that the family has agreed upon in case of fire.
- Remind sitters *never* to leave the children alone.
- In case of fire, instruct the sitter to leave the house immediately with the children and call the fire department from a neighbor's house or an outside telephone.
- Remind sitters that you do not allow smoking in or around your home and children and not to bring matches or lighters into the home.
- Make sure to leave a list of emergency information near the phone. Include the following:
 - ◆ Local fire and police department phone numbers
 - ◆ Poison control center phone number
 - ◆ Your doctor's name and phone number
 - ◆ Where you can be reached
 - ◆ Children's full names
 - ◆ Your full home address and phone number (and, if you live in a rural area, any fire identifiers)
 - ◆ Neighbor's name and phone number
 - ◆ Any special instructions

Shoes

The following information may help you make more rational decisions when you need to buy shoes for your infant.

Shoes vs. Bare Feet

- The only purpose of shoes is protection from injury, cold, or burns (from hot asphalt surfaces). No shoes are needed except when your child walks in rough terrain. Children who are walking inside a house or outside on sand or grass do not require shoes.
- Before your child starts walking, keep your child's feet warm with booties or socks during the winter.
- Once your child begins to walk, he will prefer to walk barefoot because it gives him a better sense of where his feet are and enables him to use his toes for balance. Shoes may interfere with learning to walk.

Types of Shoes

- When your child finally needs shoes, buy tennis shoes (sneakers) or some other shoe with a flexible sole that allows free movement of the foot. Tennis shoes have the advantages of comfort, ventilation, and excellent traction. Many brands are easy to wash and inexpensive.
- During the first year of walking, moccasins are usually better than sneakers. Toddlers in sneakers may have too much traction, catch the rubber sole on things, and fall.
- Hand-me-down shoes are fine if they fit and are still in good condition (the sole is still skidproof). It is not true that shoes with a previous wear pattern on the heels will cause leg or foot pains.
- Expensive shoes have no advantage at any age for 99 percent of children. Arches do not “fall.” Save your money for something more important.
- Heels are not essential at any age, and they can cause tripping during the first 2 years.
- Occasionally a toddler will need high-top sneakers because his or her feet continually slip out of low-cut shoes.
- Even children with flat feet rarely need a special shoe or heel. Tennis shoes are fine for most of these children.

Shoe Size and Fit

- With a little practice, most parents can determine whether or not a shoe fits. Check the fit with your child standing and putting weight on the shoes. The shoe should be approximately one half inch (the width of an index finger) longer than the big toe. The width of the shoe is correct if you can grasp a small piece of shoe at the widest portion of the foot (the pinch test). The heel area should be snug enough to keep the shoe from flopping up and down during walking. Also, maximum flex should be where the foot flexes and not in the middle of the shoe.
- In young growing children, shoes often become too tight before they wear out. During the second and third years of a child’s life, shoe size can change three times a year. Check the fit every few months.
- Fluoroscopy should not be used in fitting shoes because of the radiation exposure. Hopefully, all of these machines have been banished from shoe stores.

Sippy Cups

Drinking from a cup is a skill that children learn over time, which means that you shouldn't expect your child to master the technique the first time you offer a cup.

As early as 6 months, babies can be given a "sippy cup" to drink from. Nowadays, many of the cups have valves to prevent spills. At 6-9 months of age, however, the valve also requires too much of a suction for most babies, so save the valve for later and expect spills.

As for a daily routine, you can offer your baby a cup with each feeding. Water, juice, breastmilk or formula are all fine to use. Many parents try to get rid of the bottle and switch exclusively to a cup between 12 and 15 months (to coincide with the switch to whole (or 2%) milk at a year.

While this works well in that the total "milk" requirement decreases to around 16 ounces of whole milk a day, children who have only been offered juice or water from a cup don't always make the transition well when they find their cups "contaminated" with milk. Therefore, in addition to allowing your child plenty of time to refine her "sippy cup skills", I recommend offering breastmilk or formula right from the start when you introduce the cup.

Prevention of Infections

Public health methods have had the greatest impact in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Proper sewage disposal and safe water supplies have largely eliminated epidemics such as typhoid fever and cholera. Immunizations and vaccinations constitute the other aspect of modern medicine that has controlled infectious diseases like smallpox and polio.

Precautions within the home can limit the spread of gastrointestinal illnesses. Unfortunately, controlling the spread of colds, coughs, and sore throats within a family unit is impractical.

How Infectious Diseases are Spread

- Nose, mouth, and eye secretions are the most common sources of respiratory infections. These secretions are usually spread by contaminated hands or occasionally by kissing. Toddlers are especially prone to spreading these infections because of their habits of touching or mouthing everything.
- Droplet spread from coughing or sneezing is a less common means of transmission of respiratory infections. Droplets can travel up to 6 feet.
- Fecal contamination of hands or other objects accounts for the spread of most diarrhea, as well as infectious hepatitis. Unlike urine, which is usually sterile, bowel movements are composed of up to 50 percent bacteria.
- The discharge from sores such as chickenpox and fever blisters can be contagious. However, most red rashes without a discharge are not contagious by skin contact.
- Contaminated food or water accounted for many epidemics in earlier times. Even today some foods frequently contain bacteria that cause diarrhea. (For example, over 50 percent of raw turkey or chicken contains *Campylobacter* or *Salmonella*. By contrast, only 1 percent of raw eggs are contaminated with *Salmonella*.)
- Contaminated utensils such as bottles and dishes can occasionally be a source of respiratory or intestinal infections.
- Contaminated objects such as combs, brushes, and hats can lead to the spread of lice, ringworm, or impetigo.

How to Reduce or Prevent the Spread of Infectious Diseases

The following preventive actions can help reduce the spread of disease within your household.

- 1. Encourage hand washing.** Hand washing helps to prevent the spread of gastrointestinal infections more than all other approaches combined. Rinsing your hands vigorously with plain water is probably as effective as using soap and water. Hand washing is especially important after using the toilet, changing diapers, and contact with turtles or aquarium water. Choose a day care center where the staff practices good hand washing after changing diapers. Young children must be supervised in their use of toilets and sinks. Recent studies have found that hand washing is also the mainstay in preventing the spread of respiratory disease. Wash the hands after blowing or touching the nose.
- 2. Discourage habits of touching the mouth and nose.** Again, this advice is helpful in preventing the spread of respiratory infections to others. Also, touching the eyes after touching the nose is a common cause of eye infections.

- 3. Don't smoke around your children.** Passive smoking increases the frequency and severity of colds, coughs, ear infections, sinus infections, croup, wheezing, and asthma.
- 4. Discourage your child from kissing pets.** Pets (especially puppies) can transmit bloody diarrhea, worms, and other things. Pets are for petting.
- 5. Cook all poultry thoroughly.** Undercooked poultry is a common cause of diarrhea. If the poultry is frozen, thaw it in the refrigerator rather than at room temperature to prevent multiplication of the bacteria. After preparation, carefully wash your hands and any object that comes in contact with raw poultry (such as the knife and cutting board) before using them with other foods. Never serve chicken that is still pink inside (a common problem with outdoor grilling). Don't place the cooked meat on the same platter that the uncooked meat was removed from.
- 6. Use a plastic cutting board.** Germs can't be completely removed from wooden cutting boards.
- 7. Avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs.** If you make your own eggnog or ice cream, use pasteurized eggs.
- 8. Choose a small day care home over a large day care center.** Children in day care provided in private homes have a lower rate of infectious disease. Children who are cared for in their own homes by baby sitters have the lowest rate of infection. Infants are more likely to have complications from colds. If your child is less than 12 months old, try to arrange for day care in a home.
- 9. Clean contaminated areas with disinfectants.** These products kill most bacteria, including Staph. Disinfecting the diaper-changing area, cribs and strollers, play equipment, and food service items limits intestinal diseases at home and in day care centers.
- 10. Contact your child's physician if your child is exposed to meningitis or hepatitis.** Antibiotics can prevent some types of bacterial meningitis in exposed children under 4 years of age. An injection of gamma globulin helps to prevent hepatitis in children who have had intimate contact (longer than 4 hours) with someone with this disease.
- 11. Keep your child's immunization up-to-date.**
- 12. Don't attempt to isolate your child.** Isolation is mentioned last because its value within a family unit is questionable. By the time a child shows symptoms, he or she has already shared the germs with the family. Also, isolation at home is impossible to enforce.

Next Visit

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 12 months. Please bring your shot card.