

**Well Child Care at 6 Months**

**Feeding**

If you haven't started your baby on baby foods (other than cereal), you can start now. Begin with fruits and vegetables. You should start only one new food every 2-3 days. Do not start meats until your baby is 9 months old. Don't start eggs until age 12 months. At meals give the baby formula, or breast-feed your baby before giving any baby food.

Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Your baby may soon be ready for a cup although it will be messy at first. Try giving a cup occasionally to see if your baby likes it. Don't let him lie down with a bottle. This can lead to bad teeth or ear infections.

Mix cereal with formula only. Do not mix it with sugar or fruit. Use a spoon to feed your baby cereal, not a bottle or an infant feeder. Sitting up while eating helps your baby learn good eating habits.

**Development**

At this age babies are usually rolling over and beginning to sit by themselves. Babies squeal, babble, laugh, and often cry very loudly. They may be afraid of people they do not know. Be patient with your baby and meet your baby's needs quickly. The baby's first teeth (usually the lower central incisors), may erupt at this time. It is important to note that babies have varying responses to teething. If you have any questions about teething, please discuss your concerns with us.

**Sleep**

Six-month-olds may not want to be put in bed. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal may make bedtime easier. Be calm and consistent with your baby at bedtime. If your baby is not sleeping through the night, ask your doctor for further information about preventing sleep problems. In general, try to establish a consistent nightly routine and put the baby to bed drowsy but awake.

**Safety Tips**

**Avoid Choking and Suffocation**

- Cords, ropes, or strings around the baby's neck can choke him. Keep cords away from the crib.
- Keep all small hard objects out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.
- Avoid foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn).

**Avoid Fires and Burns**

- Develop and practice a fire escape plan.
- Purchase, install, and/or check your smoke detector.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Check food temperatures carefully, especially if foods have been heated in a microwave oven.
- Keep hot foods and liquids out of reach.

- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.
- Throw away cracked or frayed old electrical cords.
- Turn the water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

**Avoid Falls**

- Keep crib and playpen sides up.
- Avoid using walkers.
- Install safety gates to guard stairways.
- Lock doors to dangerous areas like the basement or garage.
- Check drawers, tall furniture, and lamps to make sure they can't fall over easily.

**Avoid Poisoning**

Keep the following out of reach or locked away:

- medicine
- vitamins
- cleaning supplies
- plumbing chemicals
- gardening chemicals
- paints and paint thinners
- agricultural chemicals.

The poison control number is 1-800-222-1222

**Immunizations**

At the 6-month visit, your baby should have a:

- DTaP (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) injection
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type B) injection
- Prevnar (pneumococcal) injection
- RotaTeq (rotavirus) oral

Some health care providers may give your child a polio vaccine either by a shot or by mouth at 6 months. Others choose to give it at a later time. Both ways are safe and acceptable.

Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for about 1 day after the shots. Your baby may also have some soreness, redness, and swelling in the area where the shots were given. Acetaminophen drops (we will give you the dose) may help to prevent fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed to provide comfort.

Call your child's physician if:

- Your child has a rash or any other reaction to the shots besides fever and mild irritability.
- Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

**Next Visit**

**Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 9 months. Please bring the shot card each time your baby is due to get shots.**

## Normal Development: 6 Months Old

Here's what you might see your baby doing between 6 and 9 months of age.

### Daily Activities

- Adores playing with balls, rattles, and squeaky toys.
- Usually sleeps through the night.
- Usually begins teething.
- May prefer some foods to others.
- May enjoy playing with food.
- Loves games like "peek-a-boo," "patty cake," and "fetch."

### Language Development

- Babbles and squeals using single syllables.
- Loves to jabber.
- May recognize own name.

### Emotional Development

- May show sharp mood changes.
- Displays especially strong attachment to mother.
- Develops deeper attachment to father, siblings, and other familiar people.

- Distinguishes children from adults.
- Smiles at other children.
- May show fear of strangers.
- Continues to be intrigued with mirror image.

### Motor Skills

- Rests on elbows.
- Begins to sit alone.
- Sits in high chair.
- Continues to use motions leading to crawling.
- Makes jumping motions when held in standing position.
- Reaches with one hand.
- Bats and grasps dangling objects.
- Holds objects between thumb and forefinger.
- Passes objects from one hand to another.

**Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain behaviors and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones. If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, please give us a call.**