

Guidance For The Parents Of The Six – Nine Month Old

Feeding

The typical baby is ready to start solid foods around 6 months of age. Start out with iron fortified baby cereal, and then slowly introduce single ingredient new foods, one at a time, and watch for adverse reactions over several days. Good sources of zinc and iron rich foods include zinc and iron fortified cereal and pureed meats, especially red meats. One ounce of infant cereal provides the daily iron requirement, particularly if you give it along with Vitamin C rich foods, such as fruit, which enhance iron absorption from the cereal. Once your baby has accepted zinc and iron fortified single grain cereal and/or pureed meats, gradually introduce other pureed or soft fruits and vegetables. Offer solid food 2-3 times per day. The only foods to be avoided are raw honey or large chunks of food that could cause choking. The latest data suggests that early introduction of ALL foods may actually prevent individual food allergies. Now there is no need to wait to introduce peanut or egg. However, if your baby has SEVERE eczema or any known food allergy, your doctor may recommend allergy testing before starting peanut based products. Read the attached handout “starting solid foods”. Most babies will drink less formula per feeding as they increase the amount of solid foods. In general, babies are ready for finger foods once they can sit well in a high chair and once they are able to pick up small objects with their fingers (pincer grasp). There are two categories of foods to avoid: small hard or rubbery foods upon which babies easily choke (whole grapes, popcorn, hotdogs, hard chunks of meat/vegetables). Between 6 and 9 months of age babies may start small amounts of dairy such as yogurt and cheese. Now is the time to introduce a cup. Most juice is not recommended for 6-month old babies as it contains excessive sugar and little nutritional value. Never give juice in a bottle as this greatly increases the risk of dental cavities. Throughout the first year, continue to breast feed or use an iron-fortified formula. Never put your baby to bed with a bottle as this practice increases the risk of dental caries. Never warm bottles or jars of baby food in a microwave oven. This practice can create hot pockets of fluid/food, which will burn your baby.

Bowel Movements

Over time babies’ bowel habits may change. Some babies will continue to have several bowel movements per day while others stool only once every 5-6 days. Both situations are normal. If your baby’s stools contain hard balls or pellets or there is blood on the surface of the stool, make an appointment to discuss constipation.

Teething

Teething is the normal process of teeth working their way through the gums. Your baby’s first tooth may appear any time between the ages of 3 months and 1 year. Most babies have painless teething. The most common symptoms are increased saliva, drooling, and a desire to chew things. Gum massage, dampened frozen washcloths and teething rings may decrease the discomfort associated with teething. If your baby has a fever or seems in pain give him Tylenol. To maintain the health of your baby’s teeth clean them 1 – 2 times daily with a washcloth and water prior to naps and bedtime.

Sleep and Behavior

Continue to place your baby on his back to sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Keep your baby in your room in a crib until

6-12 months of age. The average baby begins rolling over between 4 and 5 months of age. It is neither practical nor necessary to repeatedly return babies to their backs during the middle of the night. To be safe, the slats on your crib should be less than or equal to 2 7/8 inches apart or so that a soda can cannot fit through slats. Do not use soft bedding such as quilts, pillows, and blankets, and do not place stuffed toys in the crib as they may increase the risk of suffocation. To prevent injury, lower the crib mattress as soon as your baby is able sit independently.

By 6 months of age most babies no longer require middle of the night feedings and should be sleeping through the night. If your child wakes at the same time every night for a feed, she is probably waking out of habit and not hunger.

Usually a few nights of letting her cry it out will suffice to break this habit. If you are looking for more guidance with sleep, we recommend the book "Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child", by Mark Weissbluth.

Do not be surprised if your baby begins to cry when introduced to new people. Most babies develop stranger anxiety between 6 and 9 months of age.

Safety

Between 6 and 9 months of age most babies become mobile (crawling, scooting, and cruising along furniture and counter edges). Now is the time to baby proof your home. All small objects and plastic bags and wrappers need to be removed from the floor, tables, etc. Electrical sockets should be blocked with socket protectors or protective faceplates. To prevent electrocution, all loose electrical cords/wires should be removed. Electrical cords should be secured to prevent injuries from baby pulling lamps and appliances over. Tablecloths and runners should be removed so objects falling from the table if he pulls the cloth cannot injure baby. Cook on the back burners and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Place gates at the top and bottom of all stairways. Never place your baby in a walker. Babies sustain broken bones and severe brain injuries by falling down steps or flipping over door jams. Stationary walkers (such as an exersaucer) are safe. Since buckets of water pose a serious drowning threat to toddlers, empty all pails of water, bathtubs, and wading pools immediately after use and secure the toilet lid. Place window guards on all windows in your home. All poisonous materials (including medicines, vitamins, cleaning substances, solvents, cosmetics, some plants) need to be placed out of your baby's reach. Install baby locks on all cabinets, drawers, and closets that contain these materials. If your baby swallows or inhales a substance that may be poisonous call the **National Poison Control** immediately at **(800) 222-1222**. Do not wait for symptoms to be present - call for help as soon as you can.

Until your baby is two years of age OR weighs less than 30 pounds he requires an 5 point harness car seat rear facing and in the back seat when riding in a car. Never place a baby in a front seat with a passenger airbag. To prevent burns turn the thermostat on your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep hot liquids (coffee, soup) away from your baby. Install in your home and check on a regular basis both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. For your baby's sake, keep your home and car free of tobacco smoke. Never shake your baby - this can cause permanent neurological damage. Never leave your baby alone with young siblings or pets. A babysitter should be at least 13 years old and be able to respond to emergencies. Never leave your baby alone in a tub or high places. When on the changing table, always keep a hand on your baby. When outside, sunscreen and insect repellent should be used. Avoid lotions which combine sunscreen and insect repellent as insect repellent

should be applied only once per day and sunscreen should be reapplied periodically especially after swimming. The most effective insect repellents contain DEET – 10-30% DEET is safe to use on children. Use a brimmed hat and an umbrella to provide shade from the sun.

For more information about child health, safety and parenting visit the American Academy of Pediatrics' web site @ WWW.AAP.ORG