Allina Health

Health and Wellness: 6 Months

Development

At this age, your baby may:

- roll over
- sit with support or lean forward on his or her hands in a sitting position
- put some weight on his or her legs when held up
- play with his or her feet
- laugh, squeal, blow bubbles, imitate sounds like a cough or a "raspberry" and try to make sounds
- show signs of anxiety around strangers or if a parent leaves
- be upset if a toy is taken away or lost.

Feeding Tips

- Give your baby breastmilk or formula until his or her first birthday.
- You may introduce solid baby foods: cereal, fruits, vegetables and meats. Avoid added sugar and salt.
- Avoid honey until your baby is 1 year old. Giving honey to a child younger than 1 year old could cause infant food poisoning.
- Give your baby 400 IU of a vitamin D supplement every day.

Stools

- Your baby's bowel movements may be less firm, occur less often, have a strong odor or become a different color if he or she is eating solid foods.

Sleep

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in your room in a crib or bassinet (not in the same bed).
  - — The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends sharing a bedroom for at least the first 6 months, or preferably until your baby turns 1.
  - — Co-sleeping (sleeping in the same bed with your baby) is not recommended.
  - — Don't let your baby sleep with a sibling.
- Your baby may sleep at least 14 hours a day.
- Put your baby to bed while awake. You may give your baby a safe toy or transition object. Do not play with or have a lot of contact with your baby at bedtime.
- If you put your baby to sleep with a pacifier, take the pacifier out after your baby falls asleep.
- You should not take your baby out of the crib if he or she wakes up during the night. You can comfort your baby while he or she lies in the crib.

Safety

- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your baby every time he or she rides in a vehicle. The car seat must be properly secured in the back seat.
- According to state law, the car seat must be rear-facing (facing the rear window) until your baby is 20 pounds **and** 1 year old. Safety studies suggest that babies should be rear-facing until age 2.

(over)

- Be a good role model for your baby. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Keep your baby out of the sun. If your baby is outside, use sunscreen with a SPF of more than 15. Try to put your baby under shade or an umbrella and put a hat on his or her head.
- Do not use infant walkers. They can cause serious accidents and serve no useful purpose. A better choice is an exersaucer
- Childproof your house once your baby begins to scoot and crawl. Put plugs in the outlets, cover any sharp furniture corners, take care of dangling cords (including window blinds), tablecloths and hot liquids, and put gates on all stairways.
- Do not let your baby get small objects such as toys, nuts, coins, etc. These items may cause choking.
- Never leave your baby alone, not even for a few seconds.
- Use a playpen or crib to keep your baby safe.
- Do not hold your child while you are drinking or cooking with hot liquids.
- Turn your hot water heater to less than 120 F.
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and poisons out of your baby's reach.
- Call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) or your health care provider for directions in case your baby swallows poison. Have these numbers handy by your telephone or program them into your phone.

What To Know About Screen Time

- The first two years of life are critical during the growth and development of your child's brain. Your child needs positive contact with other children and adults.
- Screen time includes watching television and using devices such as cellphones, video games, computers and other electronics.
- Too much screen time can have a negative affect on your child's brain development. This is especially true when your child is learning to talk and play with others.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend any screen time (except for video-chatting) for children younger than 18 months.

What Your Baby Needs

- Play games such as "peek-a-boo" and "so big" with your baby.
- Talk to your baby and respond to his or her sounds. This will help stimulate speech.
- Give your baby age-appropriate toys.
- Read to your baby often. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.
- Your baby may have separation anxiety. This means he or she may get upset when a parent leaves. This is normal. Be sure you and your partner get out of the house occasionally while your baby stays home with a babysitter.
- Your baby does not understand the meaning of "no." You will have to remove him or her from unsafe situations.
- Your baby fusses or cries due to a need or frustration. He or she is not crying to upset you or to be naughty.
- **Never shake or hit your baby.** If you are losing control, take a few deep breaths, put your child in a safe place and go into another room for a few minutes. If possible, have someone else watch your child so you can take a break. Call a friend, your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.

Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting at age 3 years or earlier if there are questions or concerns. (Your baby may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)

- Clean your baby's mouth and teeth with a clean cloth or a soft toothbrush and water.

Eye Exam

The American Public Health Association recommends that your baby has an eye exam at 6 months. Talk with your regular health care provider if you have any questions.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your baby may receive these shots at this time:

- ❒ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
- ❒ HepB (hepatitis B)
- ❒ IPV (inactivated poliovirus vaccine)
- ❒ PCV13 (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, 13-valent)
- ❒ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.

Your Baby's Next Well Checkup

- Your baby's next well checkup will be at 9 months.
- Your health care provider may draw blood to check hemoglobin and lead levels.
- Your baby may need these shots:
  - ❒ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.

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