

9 Months

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DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

By 9 months of age, babies will go from sitting to lying position unassisted. Your baby may pull himself to a standing position and stand holding on to furniture. Your baby will try to move one foot in front of the other when held upright. 9-month-olds may try to crawl up stairs and may begin to walk with assistance.

Your baby will continue to enjoy banging, waving, and throwing toys. 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. They also enjoy being read to. Avoid having your child watch the TV.

Around 9 months of age they may begin to say words that sound like “mama” and “dada”. Your baby will imitate more speech sounds, but does not yet understand them.

Your baby will begin trying to imitate some parent behaviors and loves showing off for a family audience. Your baby may cry when her parent leaves the room and may resist diapering or other activities she does not want to do.

As babies develop, their needs for both independence and dependence may be at odds at times. This causes them to move rapidly from cooperation to resistance, and back again. Moods will change quickly. Your infant should be able to let you know his wants without crying by doing things such as pointing.

FEEDING

Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Breast fed babies will continue to suck for 20 to 40 minutes per breast. Most bottle fed babies now take 6 to 8 ounces of formula 3 to 4 times a day. Encourage your child to drink formula and juice from a cup now. Your child does not need juice, but if you choose to offer it, it should be diluted by

at least half with water. Make sure you buy 100% juice, not flavored drinks with a lot of sugar. It is best not to offer juice more than once per day (no more than 3 to 4 ounces) as drinking juice may cut down on your baby's desire to eat more nutritious foods. This is a good time to begin weaning from the bottle, but if you breast-feed continue to do so.

If you haven't already, you can begin adding meat to your child's diet. Now is a good time to start feeding your baby "finger foods" – small, bite-size pieces of food. You can add cheese, plain yogurt, and cottage cheese to mealtimes.

Children begin building diet habits during this stage that will last a lifetime. Toddlers will want to begin feeding themselves. Even though it is messy, this is an important task to learn. You can use foods that aren't as messy in small portions so there is less to clean up. There will be times when your infant will seem not to eat as much as before, due to a gradual reduction in the rate of growth during the end of the first year. As long as your child is offered a well balanced diet at least 3 times a day, she will eat plenty to keep her growing. You should not force your baby to eat when she is not hungry. Remember that food should not be used as a reward because this teaches bad habits.

TEETHING

Your baby's teeth may be coming in, with the lower front teeth usually coming in first. He can chew soft foods with his gums. Your baby's mouth will be sore and tender as new teeth push up. He might be fussy and not want to eat or play. Your baby will have the urge to chew on everything. Give your baby something cool and soft to chew on.

When you can see your baby's teeth, clean them gently, at least once a day. Use a soft cloth or a baby toothbrush with water. Do not use toothpaste yet. If you live in an area that does not have fluorinated water you may need to provide supplemental fluoride. Always ask your doctor before giving your baby fluoride.

SLEEP

Most infants at this age will sleep through the night without waking up to eat. A regular bedtime hour and routine are important. Babies enjoy looking at picture books and 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 for advice. Many babies are ready to give up one of the daytime naps, usually the morning nap, although some infants take two naps well into the second year.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is not punishment; rather it is the process of teaching good behavior. You teach your baby how to behave by the way you behave. Set a good example. A routine helps your baby learn what you expect. To help her learn good behavior, respond the same way each time your baby misbehaves.

Here are some discipline tips:

- Praise good behavior. Show real interest in what your baby is doing so she does not have to act up to get your attention. Catch your baby being good and praise specific behavior with words like, “*Good job!*”, “*You did it!*”, and “*Wow!*”
- Childproof your home. Your baby’s curiosity is natural and good, but on occasion may get her into danger. It is your responsibility to make sure her explorations are safe. When your baby gets into trouble, calmly move her away and give her something better to do.
- Establish daily routines for eating, sleeping and diapering. When you follow the same steps each time, your baby can learn what to expect from you. Your baby learns what you expect from him so he can begin to cooperate with you.
- Respond quickly to new signals. Your baby is crying less now and inventing new ways to get your attention. When your baby tries out a sound that you do not like, make a different sound back to him. This tells him you are listening and gives him a better way to call you.
- Listen to your baby. Work to figure out what she is trying to tell you. When you work with her, she will not have to keep trying new, louder ways to be heard.
- Be consistent. Respond the same way each time your baby misbehaves. Instead of “*No!*” use a soft voice along with words and actions that help him learn. For example, when he puts a rock in his mouth, say something like “*Yuk! That’s not to eat*” Make a face and show him how to spit it out. Say it in the same way and make the same face every time. After many repetitions, he will mimic you and begin to understand your words.

Discipline that does not work:

- A baby cannot understand “*No!*” You can tell him “*No*” in a calm, firm voice. Do not expect your baby to understand. Saying “*No*” now only prepares your baby for later when he can understand.
- Saying it again louder will not help. If you yell at your baby he will only be scared and confused. When you shout, you teach him to shout.

- Spanking teaches a wrong lesson. If you hit your baby or others, the baby learns that hitting is the way to solve problems or get what he wants. He learns to fear you. At this age, your baby cannot know what a spanking means. All physical attention should be loving, not harmful. At any age, a spanking might show your child what not to do, but it does not teach him what you expect from him. Instead of spanking him for bad behavior, try praising him for good behavior.

SAFETY TIPS

- If your child reaches 20 pounds in weight or 26 inches in length 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 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 foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts). Cut food into small pieces.
- Practice your fire escape plan.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.
- Keep all electrical appliances out of the bathroom.
- Don't cook when your child is at your feet. Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.
- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone.
- Continuously supervise your baby around any water, including toilets and buckets. Infants can drown in a bucket that has as little as 2 inches of water in it.
- Don't underestimate your child's ability to climb.
- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and gardening chemicals locked away or disposed of safely.
- Keep the number for poison control handy:

1-800-860-0620

- Ask your doctor about syrup of Ipecac. Use it only if you are told to do so.
- Avoid using baby walkers
- Avoid direct sun exposure, if you go outside with your baby, apply sunscreen.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND NEXT DOCTOR'S VISIT

If your baby's immunizations are up to date, no shots will be given today. Your child may be screened for anemia at this visit. Infants who are especially at risk include those infants who have consumed cow's milk starting before six months of age or formula not fortified with iron, and low birth weight or premature infants. If untreated, anemia can lead to fatigue, impairment of growth and development, and decreased resistance to infection.

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 12 months and will include several immunizations. Please bring your shot record to each visit.

WHAT TO EXPECT

As your infant becomes more mobile both by crawling and walking, their natural curiosity will get them into everything. Your child will begin to say 2 to 4 words, will drink from a cup, feed herself, and look for dropped or hidden objects and wave "bye-bye." Your child might start having tantrums. Continue to establish routines and praise good behavior.