

6 Months

Glacier Medical Associates

1111 Baker Ave Whitefish, MT 59937 862-2515

TEACHING YOUR BABY

All the things that happen to your baby each day affect how his brain grows and who he will become. Fill his life with love, attention, sights, sounds, colors, texture, and movement.

Include activities like:

- Help your baby learn to use his muscles by providing toys to play with. Occasionally put a toy just out of reach and watch your baby learn to use his body as he reaches for the toy.
- Mirror games will teach your baby about feelings. Make faces to show different feelings and watch your baby try to mimic you.
- Play hide-and-seek and peek-a-boo games. These games teach your baby that you go away and then you come back. This may help with separation anxiety.
- Read to your baby. When you read to your baby, you help her learn to talk and understand language. At this stage if she wants to turn the page at the “wrong” time, let her turn it. Let her chew on the book instead of reading it, if she wants to. What matters is to make books and learning a part of her normal life.

DEVELOPMENT AND NORMAL ACTIVITY

By now, babies may balance while sitting by leaning forward, or leaning to one side. They will begin to sit in a high chair. They still have difficulty raising their bodies off the floor to start to crawl, although some will begin to scoot or crawl. When on their stomach, they can pivot around to be headed in the direction they want. Usually they begin to intentionally roll over, at first from their stomach to their back and then in the reverse direction. Most babies can grasp large objects like a rattle and some can transfer items from one hand to the other – then into the mouth. Babies like to be bounced and played with. They also adore playing with balls, rattles, and squeaky toys. Often they look up when people enter the room. Your baby will babble and squeal using single syllables. Often they will recognize their name.

Your baby may show sharp mood changes. Your baby will display especially strong attachment to his mother and develop deeper attachment to his father, siblings, and other familiar people. Your baby may show fear of strangers.

FEEDING

Continue to offer your baby cereal twice a day. At 6 months, you may start to introduce more solid foods including fruits and vegetables. Add strained fruits and vegetables at first, and then add finely chopped fruits and cooked vegetables later on. It is best to avoid meats until 8 months. General guidelines for the introduction of new foods suggest that only one new food should be introduced every week. Sometimes babies push food out of the mouth by the tongue. This “spitting out” is not necessarily a sign of food dislike. In general, it is best to avoid allergy foods during the first year, and avoid choking foods until age two. If you feel a particular food is causing an allergy, remove it from your baby’s diet. Continue to avoid honey until the age of one year as it may cause infantile botulism.

Breast-fed infants will nurse 4 to 6 times a day and if bottle-fed, about 25-35 ounces of formula (**not** cow’s milk) per day. Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Don’t let him lie down with a bottle, this can lead to tooth decay or ear infections. 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. You may try 100% fruit juices diluted by half with water in a cup (never give juice in a bottle). If you decide to offer juice to your baby, limit it to 3 or 4 ounces per day.

Order of Food Introduction

4 months

Cereal: rice→ barley→ oats

6 months

Yellow vegetables: carrots→ squash→ sweet potatoes

Green vegetables: peas→ broccoli→ green beans→ spinach

Fruits and juices: avoid citrus fruits until one year

8 months

Meats: lamb →chicken →turkey→ beef →pork Avoid seafood until one year

Allergy foods

egg whites
chocolate
orange juice
wheat
tuna
seafood
corn
berries

Choking foods

hot dogs or sausage
grapes
popcorn, nuts & seeds
apple or carrot chunks
raisins
peanut butter
hard candy & gum
marshmallows

TEETHING

Your baby may begin teething. Teething is when new teeth start to push through your baby's gums. You may see swollen gums or little points of white pushing through the gum. Your baby may drool a lot, want to chew on things and have mild gum pain.

You may soothe a teething baby by:

- Massage your baby's gums.
- Give your baby teething rings. Do not give your baby ice, popsicles, or other frozen things. The cold can hurt the gums. It could even cause frostbite. Do not give hard foods like raw carrots. Your baby could choke on them.
- Watch your baby's diet. Do not give your baby salty foods or acid foods like lemons or oranges. These can bother your baby's gums. Give your baby teething biscuits.
- If your baby cries when she sucks on a bottle or nipple, change to a cup.

SLEEP

Your baby may begin to sleep through the night. 6-month-olds may not want to be put in bed. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal may make bedtime easier. Develop a bedtime routine like reading, singing a lullaby, turning the lights out, and giving a goodnight kiss. Make the routine the same every night. Be calm and consistent with your baby at bedtime. Your baby should learn to sleep alone without difficulty.

DISCIPLINE

When your baby starts to crawl, he starts to get into trouble. It is time to start to think about 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.

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.

SAFETY TIPS

- Keep all small, hard objects out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can't come loose.
- Avoid foods on which a child might choke.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. Check your smoke detector to make sure it is working. Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- **Quit smoking. If you smoke, don't smoke in the house or near the baby**
- 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.
- Keep crib and playpen sides up.
- 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.
- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and gardening chemicals locked away or disposed of safely.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- 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.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND NEXT DOCTOR'S VISIT

At today's visit, your baby should have:

- **DTaP 3rd dose** Diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis
- **Hib 3rd dose** Haemophilus influenza type B
- **IPV 3rd dose** Inactivated poliovirus
- **PCV 3rd dose** Pneumococcal pneumonia
- **Hep B 3rd dose** Hepatitis B
- **Influenza A** – yearly; a booster is required after the first dose

If your baby is irritable or sore after the shots, acetaminophen (Tylenol) may help. The appropriate dose for your baby is:

- Acetaminophen: 120mg every 4 to 6 hours.
- Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 9 months. If your baby's shots are up to date, immunizations will not be given at 9 months. In any case, please bring the shot record to each visit.

CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN IF:

- Your child has a rash or any reaction to the immunizations other than fever and mild irritability.
- Your baby has a fever over 101.5° F or if the fever lasts more than 36 hours.

You can reach a doctor 24 hours a day by calling: 862-2515

WHAT TO EXPECT

Within the next few months your baby will begin to know and respond to his own name and begin to understand some words. Your baby may be able to sit alone and stand supporting some of his weight for a short time. Your baby will enjoy playing games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. Putting your child to bed may become more difficult because of separation anxiety or anxiety created by distance from parents. Also, your baby's appetite may drop off temporarily as her growth slows somewhat.