

SUBURBAN PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

WELL CHILD CARE AT 6 MONTHS

Feeding

If you haven't started your baby on baby foods (other than cereal), you should start now. Begin with fruits or vegetables. You should start only one new food every 2-3 days. Do not start meats until your baby is 7 months old. At meals give the baby formula, or breast-feed your baby before giving any baby food. Recent studies suggest exposing infants to peanut or egg products prior to age 1 year old may decrease future allergy risk to these foods.

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 bad teeth or ear infections. You may introduce a cup at 9 months of age. Even though babies are very interested in solids, do not let solids take over. Breast milk or formula is still their main source of nutrition.

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. If you are nursing or using the ready to feed formula, discuss with us about fluoride supplementation.

Development

At this age babies are usually rolling over and beginning to sit briefly 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 our 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 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. However, blankets should not be used until infant can get themselves to a sitting position unassisted. 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.

Immunizations

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

- Pentacel (Dtap, Polio, and Hib injection)
- RotaTeq (rotavirus) oral
- Prevnar (pneumococcal) injection
- Begin the flu vaccine

Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for about 1-2 days 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 relieve fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, cool washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed to provide comfort.

Call us 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.

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).
- Remove toys that string across cribs.

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, and remember to not heat bottle in microwave.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.
- Throw away cracked or frayed old electrical cords.
- Turn the water heater own to 120 °F.

Avoid Falls

- Keep crib and playpen sides up.
- Do not use mobile 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.

Next Visit

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 9 months. Please bring your immunization book 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.
-) Drooling and hand to mouth behaviors are present.
-) May prefer some foods to others.
-) May enjoy playing with food.
-) Distinguishes children from adults
-) Smiles at other children.
-) May show fear of strangers.
-) Continues to be intrigued with mirror image.

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.

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.
-) 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.