

PE D I A T R I C S

of
Northeastern Pennsylvania

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YOUR NINE MONTH OLD

Doesn't it seem like all of a sudden your sweet baby isn't your baby anymore? Tremendous strides toward independence are being made now. So it's important to begin setting some rules and limits. Included in this handout is some general "baby info." to help get you started.

NUTRITION

This is a great time to begin introducing table food while the baby is seated at the table with the family. Foods that are soft and easily "gummed " are best. (i.e., soft cooked carrots, baked potatoes, bananas, bits of cheese, puffy snacks) These foods encourage self-feeding, which is becoming important to baby right about now. If your child seems to have problems with the texture of these foods, wait a few weeks and try again – every baby is ready for texture at a different age. Your baby should still be taking breastmilk or formula roughly four times daily, and should no longer require a bottle at night.

Continue to offer your child a cup with plain water or very dilute juice at mealtimes. As your child approaches one year old, the cup should be offered more frequently and the bottle less frequently to promote weaning. Some children will be weaned by the end of the first year, others will take longer. Do not use a bottle as a pacifier. Encourage other modes of self soothing. If you are breastfeeding it is recommended that you continue to at least one year old, longer if you and baby both wish to continue,

Keep in mind that growth is slowing down considerably as compared to the first months of life. Also, baby's need for independence affects their desire to eat. Some days your baby will eat great, others, hardly at all. Try to stay calm and relaxed. Your baby will eat when hungry. Offer only nutritious foods and drinks as baby desires allowing him/her to manipulate food as much as possible. Also be sure that your baby is not filling up on too much juice which provides empty calories and will decrease your child's appetite. If you are giving juice limit the quantity to 4 ounces daily.

SAFETY

Increased mobility may lead to falling and accidents, so take precautions. Remember to use gates at stairwells and to block unsafe rooms. Use your playpen as an island of safety.

Your baby will be starting to pull to a stand and may easily grab and pull down tablecloths on which heavy or hot containers have been placed. Sharp objects such as knives, scissors, tools and razor blades become potential hazards and should be kept in a secure place.

Objects on low tables, such as coins, ashtrays, candy dishes, beads, pins, art objects and medicine may also become a hazard. Prevent your child from playing with extension cords by not making their presence obviously visible and sockets by using plug protectors. Windows can now be reached for, or climbed onto, so install safety devices on windows and screens.

Increased mouthing is also occurring. Be aware of the possibility of your child ingesting medicine or other harmful substances. If you suspect an ingestion has occurred call **Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222**. Please remember not to store a potentially harmful substance in a bottle or glass jar. Keep all chemicals and cleaners in original jar and place in a locked cabinet where child cannot access. "Mr. Yuk" stickers are helpful too. Remember too, medicine should not be referred to as candy.

Remember that babies remain rear facing until two years of age. If your child has outgrown her infant carrier, you may move her to a toddler carseat, but it must be rear installed rear facing. Please use this each time the child is in the car and use it correctly. Your child should be rear facing in a car seat until he/she is 1 year old. Buckle-up Mom and Dad too. Remember how loudly example speaks.

Continue to be on your guard around any body of water, bath, pool or lake. Your child should NEVER-EVER be left alone near water or in the bathtub.

SLEEP

Remember, infants thrive on routine. A regular bedtime and bedtime ritual is advised. Night waking is fairly common. Don't fall back to any bad habits, like rocking, bottles, etc. Use a favorite toy or possession and a calm manner to get through this transitional period. Try to put your child in the crib drowsy but awake and let her learn to put herself to sleep.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Many children at this age will cry when their parents leave their presence. This is due to the child's level of development and is NOT due to spoiling. Neither does it mean that you or Dad are harming the child by an occasional night away or by returning to work.

GROWING TIPS

Remember to encourage vocalization and socialization by imitating baby's sounds. Social games (i.e., peek a boo, patty cake) also encourage interaction and imitation.

Allow and participate in your child's exploration of their world. Show them the picky fur trees, the soft green grass, a furry kitten, how to stack two blocks.

As you see your baby's independence emerging and the "battle of wills" begins, be assured this is a very important and normal part of development, not a bad child who is opposing parental authority. Of course limits must be set as to what behavior is allowed and what is not. This is called DISCIPLINE, not punishment. The rules will need to be made known over and over and over again with much patience and firmness, and when a child can't accept a limit such as "don't climb the stairs", repeat your verbal "no" and then follow with physical action. Remove the child from the dangerous situation and distract with a new activity. Don't be a "no" Mom. Tell your child what TO do instead of always what NOT to do.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Refer to immunization chart in baby book for immunizations due.

Immunizations and their schedules change according to the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Check with your physician for changes/updates.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Motor

Crawls, creeps on hand, may crawl up stairs, may crawl on straightened limbs.
Pulls to a stand, cruises, may stand alone briefly, may get to a stand without pulling on furniture, gets down from standing.
Sits well on a chair, steadily and indefinitely alone.
Gets up to sit effortlessly.
Successfully grasps things with thumb and forefinger.
Index finger begins to lead, points, tries to poke into holes, hooks and pulls.
May build tower of two blocks

Language

Signals emphasis and emotions by vocalization
Imitates coughs, tongue clicks and hisses
Uses words meaningfully, says DaDa, MaMa
May say syllable or longer sequence repeatedly
Responds to own name and to questions such as "Where is MaMa" or to familiar objects when named.
Listens to conversations and singing tunes
May carry out simple commands and is pleased with his understanding

Mental

May refuse to be distracted, begins showing persistence
Approaches small objects with two fingers, large objects with two hands
Uncovers toys he sees hidden showing object permanence
Grows bored with repetition of the same stimuli and may remember a game from the previous day
Anticipates return of person or thing released manually or visually

Social

Recognizes Mom and self in mirror
Perceives Mom as a separate person
Performs for home audience and will repeat the act if applauded
May learn to protect themselves and possessions, will fight for disputed toy and may be more sensitive to other children, such as crying if they cry
Shows interest in other peoples play, imitates play and chooses toy deliberately
Feeds self cracker, holds bottle, uses cup handle, manipulates and drinks from cup
May fear bath, may react to strangers with anxiety or even fear

Please remember these are "typical" milestones for this particular aged child, but every baby is an individual and variations are to be expected.

Please call our office between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. That's what OUR part of YOUR team is all about.