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Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

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## **ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE**

### **6-9 MONTHS**

#### **FEEDING:**

From 6-9 months breast milk or infant formula remains a major source of nutrition. The number of feedings may decrease over this time. Your baby will start to drink some liquids from a cup during this period if you offer them. Try a sippy cup at this time. Developmentally a child can start drinking from a straw at 9 months of age.

#### **Breast or Bottle Feeding:**

To start your baby drinking from a cup offer the baby water or breast milk or formula in a cup until the baby handles the cup well. Then begin offering your baby a cup at feeding time. Your baby can take more from a cup as they get closer to 9 months of age.

#### **Vegetables/Fruits:**

At 5 to 6 months of age your baby is old enough to start strained vegetables or fruits. Fruits and vegetables are an important part of your baby's diet. They give bulk and help develop regular bowel movements. Fruits and vegetables also teach babies different colors, tastes and textures. The daily diet is now ready to include breast milk or formula, cereal, fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables also contain important vitamins and minerals for your baby's nutritional health.

#### **When should strained fruits/vegetables be started?**

After your baby has been taking cereal from a spoon and has tried 2 or 3 cereals it is time to start with fruits and/or vegetables. You want to give 1 new fruit or vegetable every 3 days. After 3 days you may decide to add a new fruit or vegetable to your baby's diet. Your baby may get a fruit, vegetable and rice cereal all at the same time. This is called an additive diet. To start, only use a single fruit or vegetable. Do not buy mixed fruits or vegetables until your baby has tried each of the fruits or vegetables separately. You may also prepare your baby's fruit and vegetables if that is something you desire to do. You may ask me how, or there are also some good books to help you get started on how to make your own baby food. You do not need to add any salt, sugar or fat to the food. Your baby will enjoy the fruits, vegetables and cereals as they are pre-packaged. Even when preparing your own baby food, avoid seasoning fruits and vegetables prior to giving them to you baby.

#### **When is the best time to start feeding the baby?**

I prefer giving the baby his first meal in the evening. It appears that most families are consistently at home in the evening and the baby can be fed everyday at the same-which is an important aspect of starting children on solid foods. Feed your baby solid foods when



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they are not overly hungry. If your baby is overly hungry, they will be crying and fussy. I would advise giving them either breast milk or formula in a small amount to soothe their stomach before offering solid food. By the time the baby is 6-8 months of age they will be able to sit in a highchair. At this time you can still give your baby foods with a spoon, but it's also a good time to start with finger foods. You want to give your baby small pieces of banana, avocado and very ripe melon. These are soft and easily chewable. The baby can also begin working on Cheerios. Place 2 or 3 Cheerios or 2 or 3 pieces of banana (whatever you plan on giving the baby) on a tray table. Allow the child to pick it up themselves. This will also help develop a fine motor skill called pincher grasp. This teaches your baby independence. Your baby will find joy in feeding themselves.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

This is the time when your baby will develop stranger anxiety. This is completely normal. It has also been called baby shyness. It is important for other family members to realize that the baby will have stranger anxiety at this age and if they are not used to seeing these other family members, they will cry. For example, if grandma sees the baby every 2 or 3 weeks the baby may cry when they see her. This is also a time when your baby will start to sit alone. This is a good time to put toys close to them so that they may play with them while sitting in place. Some babies start to crawl at about 8 months and they try to pull themselves up on everything. This is when it is important to make sure that all furniture is stable and that there is baby proofing of the house or the rooms in which the baby will be in. That is, if you don't want the baby to touch it, break it, tear it, or get into it, put it up and put it away. It is also time to put latches on cupboards and socket protectors on all electrical outlets. All cords plugged into electrical outlets should be secured with baby secured plug protectors and cords to lamps and other electrical appliances should be made difficult or impossible to get to at this age.

Your baby will be making lots of sounds-not words, just sounds. When a baby is making sounds like baba, dada, mama, make these sounds back to your baby. Your baby will smile, and find humor in it and will be able to chatter with you. It will appear as though the baby is having an intellectual conversation with you. This is a fun thing to do with your baby.

Your baby will still like to put everything in their mouths. This is why it is so important to make sure that your house is baby proofed from the ground to 4 feet up.



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**SAFETY:**

**The Kitchen:**

Hot liquids, foods, electrical cords, and appliances all must be out of reach. Electrical cords are dangerous. For example, if the ironing board is up and the iron is on the ironing board the baby can get to the cord of the iron and pull the iron down on himself. Table cloths can be pulled down. Make sure they do not hang over the edge of the table. Do not hold the baby while you are drinking hot liquids or eating hot cereals. Do not put the baby in the car seat or baby bouncer on the counter when you are working. Babies have a tendency to knock themselves out of the car seat or knock the bouncer onto the floor, baby and all.

**Locking Cabinets:**

It is important now to put all your soaps, poisons, medicines, and detergents in cabinets other than below the sink. They need to be put away right after use. Your baby will try to taste all of these if they can get into them.

**Stairs:**

They need to be fenced off. It is appropriate to determine which room the child should be allowed in and gate off the rest of the house to protect the baby. Gates need to be placed at the bottom and top of stairs. This is a nuisance to the parents to have to open the gates to go up and down. If your baby falls down the stairs your guilt will be far greater than your inconvenience.

**Burns:**

Burns on children can come from many sources: the fireplace and heating grates on the floor are just 2 examples. Heating registers and grates need to be blocked off or secured so that the baby cannot get to them. Fireplaces and fire inserts need to have screens around them that the baby cannot move or knock down. Make sure that all hot liquids are not accessible to the baby. For example, if you're feeding the baby breakfast in the morning and you have a cup of hot coffee, keep the cup of coffee away from the baby while you're feeding him.

**Other Dangerous Objects in the House:**

By now you should have walked through the house, identifying problems which the baby can get into. I always suggest that mother and father start at opposite ends of the house, walk through each room independently writing down all hazards that they see. They need to meet up and then go room by room together to compare notes to determine what other things they may have missed. Then correct the hazards. Remember, babies pull themselves up on everything. Please be careful.



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### NORMAL DEVELOPMENT FOR 6-7 MONTHS

- Rests on elbows.
- May sit alone for up to 30 seconds.
- Sits in highchair.
- Continues to use motions leading to crawling.
- Makes jumping motions when held in standing position.
- Reaches with one hand.
- Bats and grasps dangling objects.
- Hold objects between thumb and finger.
- Passes objects from one hand to another.
- Adores playing with balls, rattles, and squeaky toys.
- Usually sleeps through the night.
- Usually begins teething.
- May prefer some foods to others.
- May enjoy playing with food.
- Babbles and squeals using single syllables.
- Loves to jabber.
- May recognize own name.
- May show sharp mood changes.
- Displays especially strong attachment to mother.
- Develops deeper attachment to father, siblings and other familiar people.
- Distinguishes children from adults.
- Smiles at other children.
- May show fear of strangers.
- Continues to be intrigued with mirror images.
- Loves games like "peck-a-boo," and "fetch."

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 attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. Consequently, these guidelines are offered as a way of showing 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 pattern of development, check with your pediatrician.

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**NORMAL DEVELOPMENT FOR 7-8 MONTHS**

- Rolls from back to stomach.
- Sits alone more steadily.
- Attempts to crawl.
- Hold objects between both hands.
- Supports portion of own weight for a short time when helped in standing position.
- Holds onto desired object tightly.
- May show hand preference.
- Delights in banging and throwing toys.
- Is keenly interested in sounds.
- Begins to repeat single syllables (mama, dada, mumu).
- Begins to recognize own name.
- May begin to understand "no" by tone of voice.
- Watches adult mouths when they speak.
- Resists doing what they don't want to do.
- Craves constant attention.
- Begins to show sense of humor.
- Enjoys other children at times.
- May react strongly to strangers by crying.
- Responds gleefully to image in the mirror.

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### **NORMAL DEVELOPMENT FOR 8-9 MONTHS**

- Gets into sitting position.
- Sits steadily without assistance.
- Crawls easily.
- May pull self to standing position.
- Stand with assistance.
- Uses thumb adeptly.
- Loves to bang toys together.
- May show dislike for certain foods.
- May want to feed self.
- Babbles happily and musically.
- Repeats single syllable sounds (mama, dada, mumu).
- Imitates some speech sounds.
- Recognizes own name.
- Understands the meaning of "no."
- May begin to understand other simple words and single commands.
- Shows separation anxiety.
- Displays fear of strangers (stranger anxiety reaches peak).
- Continues to enjoy simple games like "peek-a-boo" and "fetch".

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