

# eClinicalWorks

## Well-Baby Checkup: 9 Months

At the 9-month checkup, the healthcare provider will examine your baby and ask how things are going at home. This sheet describes some of what you can expect.



### Development and milestones

The healthcare provider will ask questions about your baby. And he or she will observe the baby to get an idea of the baby's development. By this visit, your baby is likely doing some of the following:

- Understanding "no"
- Using fingers to point at things
- Making different sounds such as "dadada" or "mamama"
- Sitting up without support
- Standing, holding on
- Feeding himself or herself
- Moving items from one hand to the other
- Looking around for a toy after dropping it
- Crawling
- Waving and clapping his or her hands
- Starting to move around while holding on to the couch or other furniture (known as "cruising")
- Getting upset when separated from a parent, or becoming anxious around strangers

## Feeding tips

By 9 months, your baby's feedings can include "finger foods," as well as rice cereal and soft foods (see below). Growth may slow and the baby may begin to look thinner and leaner. This is normal. It doesn't mean the baby isn't getting enough to eat. To help your baby eat well:

- Don't force your baby to eat when he or she is full. During a feeding, you can tell your baby is full if he or she eats more slowly or bats the spoon away.
- Your baby should eat solids 3 times each day and have breast milk or formula 4 to 5 times per day. As your baby eats more solids, he or she will need less breastmilk or formula. By 12 months of age, most of the baby's nutrition will come from solid foods.
- Start giving water in a sippy cup. This is a baby cup with handles and a lid. A cup won't yet replace a bottle, but this is a good age to start to use it.
- Don't give your baby cow's milk to drink yet. Other dairy foods are OK, such as yogurt and cheese. These should be full-fat products (not low-fat or nonfat).
- Be aware that foods such as honey should not be fed to babies younger than 12 months of age. In the past, parents were advised not to give foods that commonly trigger an allergic reaction to babies. But experts now think that starting these foods earlier may actually help lower the risk of developing an allergy. Talk with the healthcare provider if you have questions.
- Ask the healthcare provider if your baby needs fluoride supplements.

## Health tips

- If you notice sudden changes in your baby's stool or urine, tell the healthcare provider. Keep in mind that stool will change, depending on what you feed your baby.
- Ask the healthcare provider when your baby should have his or her first dental visit. Pediatric dentists recommend that the first dental visit should occur soon after the first tooth erupts above the gums. Your child may not need dental care right now, but an early visit to the dentist will set the stage for life-long dental health.

## Sleeping tips

At 9 months of age, your baby will be awake for most of the day. He or she will likely nap once or twice a day, for a total of about 1 to 3 hours each day. The baby should sleep about 8 to 10 hours at night. If your baby sleeps more or less than this but seems healthy, it is not a concern. To help your baby sleep:

- Get the child used to doing the same things each night before bed. Having a bedtime routine helps your baby learn when it's time to go to sleep. For example, your routine could be a bath, followed by a feeding, followed by being put down to sleep. Pick a bedtime and try to stick to it each night.
- Don't put a sippy cup or bottle in the crib with your child.
- Be aware that even good sleepers may begin to have trouble sleeping at this age. It's OK to put the baby down awake and to let the baby cry him- or herself to sleep in the crib. Ask the healthcare provider how long you should let your baby cry.

## Safety tips

As your baby becomes more mobile, it's important to keep a close watch on them. Always be aware of what your baby is doing. An accident can happen in a split second. To keep your baby safe:

- If you haven't already done so, childproof the house. If your baby is pulling up on furniture or cruising (moving around while holding on to objects), be sure that big pieces such as cabinets and TVs are tied down. Otherwise they may be pulled on top of the child. Move any items that might hurt the child out of his or her reach. Be aware of items like tablecloths or cords that the baby might pull on. Do a safety check of any area where your baby spends time in.
- Don't let your baby get hold of anything small enough to choke on. This includes toys, solid foods, and items on the floor that the baby may find while crawling. As a rule, an item small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube can cause a child to choke.
- Don't leave the baby on a high surface such as a table, bed, or couch. Your baby could fall off and get hurt. This is even more likely once the baby knows how to roll or crawl.
- In the car, the baby should still face backward in the car seat. Babies and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat for as long as possible.

This means until they reach the top weight or height allowed by their seat. Check your safety seat instructions. Most convertible safety seats have height and weight limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more.

- Keep this Poison Control phone number in an easy-to-see place, such as on the refrigerator: 800-222-1222.

## Vaccines

Based on recommendations from the CDC, at this visit your baby may get the following vaccines:

- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Influenza (flu)

## Make a meal out of finger foods

Your 9-month-old has likely been eating solids for a few months. If you haven't already, now is the time to start serving finger foods. These are foods the baby can pick up and eat without your help. (You should always supervise!) Almost any food can be turned into a finger food, as long as it's cut into small pieces. Here are some tips:

- Try pieces of soft, fresh fruits and vegetables such as banana, peach, or avocado.
- Give the baby a handful of unsweetened cereal or a few pieces of cooked pasta.
- Cut cheese or soft bread into small cubes. Large pieces may be difficult to chew or swallow and can cause a baby to choke.
- Cook crunchy vegetables, such as carrots, to make them soft.
- Don't give your baby any foods they might choke on. This is common with foods about the size and shape of the child's throat. They include sections of hot dogs and sausages, hard candies, nuts, raw vegetables, and whole grapes. Ask the healthcare provider about other foods to stay away from.
- Make a regular place for the baby to eat with the rest of the family, in his or her high chair. This could be a corner of the kitchen or a space at the dinner

table. Offer cut-up pieces of the same food the rest of the family is eating (as appropriate).

- If you have questions about the types of foods to serve or how small the pieces need to be, talk to the healthcare provider.