

Wellness Guide at 9 Months Old

Helpful tips to support your child's development at this stage of life.



Development

- **Activities:** Your assertive baby is on the move. Your baby can sit and play, but may also be scooting/crawling, pulling up to a stand, and "cruising". Your child can pick up small objects between their thumb and index finger (pincer grasp). Pushing buttons and rolling balls help figure out how things work. Activities/books/songs/rhymes with repetition are fun, predictable, and help to build memory.
- **Communication:** Your baby can imitate speech by babbling consonant sounds ("bababa" or "dadada") and actions such as waving "bye-bye". You can help your baby "speak" by providing words for her emotions and pictures/objects your child is interested in.
- **Awareness:** Your baby understands that things still exist even if they cannot see them making "hide-and-seek" games more fun, and "goodbyes" even

harder. Remember, never sneak out. Your baby's awareness may cause them to be clingy with their caregivers and more fearful with strangers. Providing comfort is soothing, not "spoiling".

- **Interaction:** Face-to-face interaction with caregivers and avoiding screen time, except for live video chatting with loved ones, will enhance your child's social and verbal development.

DEVELOPMENTAL RESOURCES

THE 5 C_s OF MEDIA USE

WA STATE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Infant Care



Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help with fever and signs of discomfort.

DOSING TABLES



Teething rings, a cool washcloth, or a clean finger can be used to massage baby's gums during times of teething discomfort. Brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice on a soft toothbrush or clean finger. Avoid teething products with benzocaine.

IS IT TEETHING?



It is safe to take your baby outdoors if they are dressed appropriately and protected from the weather. Be cautious about exposing your baby to crowds or to people who may be sick. Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher).

BABY SUNBURN PREVENTION



Saline drops and suction can be used for nasal congestion, which is common in infants.

NASAL SUCTIONING

Family Well-being

Nine month olds are developing opinions, strong feelings, and expectations that can lead to frustration and upset. Sometimes infants can be calmed by distraction, sometimes they need to be held, or sometimes talking to them calmly can help. This is normal, though can be exhausting for caregivers. It is OK to take time for yourself.

Consider letting your baby stay with someone you trust in order to find time for yourself or to reconnect with your partner/friends.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

POISON CONTROL:
(800) 222-1222

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE: 988

Overseas Travel

If your family will be traveling internationally, schedule a virtual eTravel consultation at least 4–6 weeks before departure to review travel health recommendations. Consider early MMR and HepA vaccines to help protect your baby.

TRAVEL CONSULTATION

Safety & Child-proofing

- Dangling cords, hot liquids, tablecloths, appliances, plastic bags, electrical outlets, and stairs can all be dangerous to an exploring/curious baby.
- Keep household cleaners, vitamins, and medicines out of reach.
- Keep your baby safe with constant supervision during bath time and when on high surfaces such as changing tables, beds, and sofas.
- Avoid walkers. They can tip over and cause your baby harm.
- Be careful of small objects and powder: babies can choke on them. Small magnets and batteries, when swallowed, can cause serious internal injuries.
- Install the car seat in the back seat, rear-facing.
- Check to make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working.
- Avoid smoke/tobacco/cigarette/vaping liquid or smoke/marijuana exposure.
- Consider learning infant/child CPR.

SAFETY RESOURCES

SAFE SLEEP

CAR SEAT SAFETY

Nutrition

- Your baby is transitioning to solids as a main source of nutrition and calories. Continue breast milk and/or formula. Avoid cow's milk as a drink until age 1, though dairy foods are okay.
- Give Vitamin D (400 IU/day) to your baby.
- Continue simple routines with 3 meals a day including fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins. Meals are a chance to spend time together as a family. Offer [iron-rich foods](#) daily.
- Your baby may be ready for thicker or lumpier foods and may begin feeding themselves with support. You may try baby-led weaning with soft finger foods, thin strips, or mashed textures. Avoid choking hazards.
- Let your baby decide how much and how quickly to eat. Mealtimes should be relaxed, patient, and sometimes messy.
- Offer small amounts of water (about 4–8 oz/day), but this does not replace breast milk or formula. Your baby does not need juice, tea, or flavored drinks. **Avoid honey.** Offer an open cup for practice.
- Prevent lead exposure by only using spices from the US and avoiding contaminated soil, dust, paint, and water. [Learn more](#) about lead toxicity and testing.

NUTRITION RESOURCES

STARTING SOLIDS

CONSTIPATION

Sleep

- Simple, calming, bedtime routines can help prepare your baby for bedtime. Try to recognize signs that your baby is getting tired.
- Help your baby learn how to fall asleep on their own by putting them down when they are drowsy, but not fully asleep. Expect a protest if this is a new change for your child.
- Some babies establish a pattern of naps with long stretches of sleep, but others are fine taking shorter naps or napping at less regular times.

Recognizing patterns and creating a nap ritual can be helpful. Nap patterns will change as your baby grows and develops.

- Anticipate sleep disruptions as part of normal development.

SLEEP RESOURCES

LEARNING TO SLEEP

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DOSING TABLES [↗](#)

COMMON ILLNESS SUPPORT [↗](#)

PATIENT EDUCATION [↗](#)