

# WELL-CHILD CARE

## Six Month Old Visit

Your Baby's Development	
<b>Social Emotional</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your baby should be making good eye contact and pointing to show you things.</li><li>Your baby should be able to recognize whether a person is a stranger or not.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your baby should be using oral exploration for learning</li></ul>
<b>Communicative</b>	<b>Physical Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your baby should be stringing vowels together (babbling "ah," "eh," "oh).</li><li>Your baby should be "turn talking"</li><li>Your baby should be recognizing his own name</li><li>Your baby should be beginning to use consonant sounds ("m," "b") and then combine together ("ah," "ba") as jargon</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your baby should be rolling over, sitting, standing, bouncing. When your baby is on her belly, she will gradually be moving into a crawling position.</li><li>Your baby should be rocking back and forth, often crawling backward before moving forward.</li><li>Your baby should be able to follow you around the room with her eyes.</li></ul>

### Fostering Your Baby's Development

- Establish consistent and predictable daily routines for your baby.
- Try putting your baby in a high chair or upright seat during awake time (instead of his crib) to allow him to visually explore and interact with you.



### Play with your baby!

Look at books and pat pictures. Use soft or hard books that your baby can hold and not rip.

Play music and sing

Immitate your baby's vocalizations

Play games such as "pat-a-cake" and "peek-a-boo"



## Eating

It is time to introduce solid foods to your baby! Your job as a parent will be to provide a wide variety of appropriate foods. Your baby's job will be to decide how much to eat.

### Get your baby in position

Once your baby can sit without support, feed him in a highchair with a broad, stable base. Buckle the safety straps. Keep other children from climbing on hanging on to the highchair. You and your baby should face each other. Your baby's arms should be free.

### Start with iron-fortified baby cereal

Mix 1 teaspoon cereal with 4 to 5 teaspoons of breast milk or formula. Offer the cereal with a small spoon once or twice a day. Once your baby gets the hang of swallowing runny cereal, mix it with less liquid.

If your baby isn't interested in the cereal, be patient! Wait a week or so and try again!

### After baby cereal

Once your baby has mastered cereal, gradually introduce pureed meats, then vegetables, then fruits. Offer **single-ingredient** foods and **wait 1 week** between each new food.

Watch for reactions to the foods, like diarrhea, rash, vomiting.

Do not give your baby peanuts, tree allergies, fish, and shellfish in the first year of life.

### General Guidelines

Offer solid foods 2 to 3 times per day. Let your baby decide how much she wants to eat. If she rejects a food, move on a try again later. Do not force her to eat.

Continue your regular feeding of breast milk or formula. Your baby should take breast milk or formula at least 5 to 6 times in 24 hours. Continue to feed your baby when he shows hunger cues.

You may need to introduce a food to your baby up to 15 times before he will eat it! If you keep trying, your baby will eventually accept the new food.



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Your baby does not need juice – this is a source of “empty calories”. If you want to give your baby juice, introduce it when she is taking solids more than 3 times a day. Give it to her in a cup during snack time.

#### Tips for Mealtime!

- Your baby is likely to play with her food between bites. This is okay and helps her development! Place a dropcloth on the floor so you won't worry about falling food.
- Offer your baby a spoon to hold while you feed him with another spoon. Encourage your baby to dip the spoon in food and bring it to his mouth.
- Feed her breast milk or formula from a sippy cup at mealtime – this helps pave the way for weaning from a bottle. We want your baby to be drinking from a sippy cup by nine months of age.
- Place small amounts of food in a separate dish and feed your baby from this. If you feed your baby directly from a jar, bacteria from the spoon can quickly spoil any leftovers.
- Know when to call it quits. Remember, your baby will let you know how much she needs. When your baby has had enough to eat, he may turn away from the spoon, lean backward, or refuse to open his mouth. Don't force extra bites. As long as your baby's growth is on target, you can be confident that she is getting enough to eat.

#### Sleep

- Your baby should be sleeping for longer stretches at night – 6 to 8 hours.
- Establish a **bedtime routine** for you and your baby. This routine should occur within the hour before bed. Things to include are a nighttime bath, reading a book to your baby, giving your baby a bottle.
- Your baby should go to bed early – around 7 p.m. Children have a natural “sleep window”. If you miss the window, they get a second wind and are even harder to put to sleep. **Most babies sleep better and longer with an earlier bedtime.**
- Place your baby in his crib when he is drowsy but not asleep. Talk to your baby gently and pat him to sleep. This will help your baby learn that he can go to sleep on his own. When he awakens at night he will be more likely to go back to sleep without your help.
- Keep regular naps. Daytime naps affect the quality of nighttime sleep.

#### Crying

- Your baby may continue to have periods of fussiness and irritability. Crying won't hurt your baby.
- When your baby is crying check to see that she has been fed and that she does not have a dirty diaper. Check her from head to toe to see if there could be something causing her to cry.



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- If your baby continues to be fussy, she may be tired or bored. Regular daily naps and giving her a variety of short play activities are good strategies for dealing with overtiredness and boredom.
- You may find that you cannot console your baby. Some babies can be very difficult to calm no matter what you do. If you find that you become overwhelmed or frustrated by your baby's crying, put your baby down in a safe place and walk away. Seek out some help from friends, family, or your healthcare provider. Never, ever, shake your baby. This can cause permanent brain damage.

### Safety

#### Car Safety

- Always put your baby in a **rear-facing** car seat in the **back seat**. Never place your baby's car seat in the front seat with a passenger air bag.
- Is your car seat properly installed? You can find information about car seats at [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).
  - A **Child Safety Seat Inspection Station** can inspect your car seat to see if you are installing your car seats properly. You can find this at [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) or by calling 866.732.8243.
- Keep your baby in the back seat until he is at least 1 year of age and weighs at least 20 pounds.

#### Home Safety

- Never leave a child alone in or near a tub of water. Water can cause severe scalding burns and young children can drown in less than 2 inches of water.
- Infants can roll off of furniture like changing tables, couches, and beds. Falls are the most common reasons for emergency room visits. Get in the habit of always keeping one hand on the baby when changing diapers or clothing on changing tables.
- Do not allow your child to play with small objects. They can be placed in the mouth and your baby can choke.

#### Household Poisons

- Keep cleaners, chemicals, medicines locked up and out of your child's sight and reach (up high!).
- If your child eats something that could be poisonous, call the Poison Control Center right away at 1.800.222.1222. Do not make your child vomit.



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- Place the Poison Control Center number next to all your phones and on the refrigerator.

#### Protect Your Crawling Baby

- Use gates on stairways and close doors to keep you baby out of rooms where she might get hurt.
- Do not use infant walkers. Your baby may tip the walker, fall out of it, or fall down stairs. Baby walkers let children get to places where they can pull heavy objects or hot food on themselves.

#### Prevent Burns

- Do not drink hot liquids while holding your baby.
- Adjust your water heater to 120 degrees F or less. Before bathing your baby, always test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not too hot.

#### Fire Safety

- Buy a **fire extinguisher** for the home. The most common causes of home fires are cooking and heating equipment.
- Install **smoke alarms** in your home. Have an alarm on each floor and in the sleeping areas of the home. Check alarms monthly. Change the batteries at least once a year.

#### Gun Safety

- More than 5,000 children and adolescents are killed by gunfire each year. **Most of these injuries are almost always inflicted by themselves, a sibling, or a friend.**
- If you choose to keep a gun in the home, store it **unloaded** in a **locked** place. Lock and store the ammunition in a **separate** place.

#### Sleep Safety

- Your baby should continue to sleep on his back to reduce the risk of sudden death. Do not use loose, soft bedding or soft toys in the crib.
- Do not let your baby sleep in your bed.
- Your baby's crib should have slats that are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart and with a mattress that is the same size as the crib. The crib should be certified by the JPMA. Keep the sides of the crib raised when your baby is sleeping in it.
- If you use a mesh playpen or portable crib, the weave should have openings less than 1/4 inch. Never leave your baby in a mesh playpen with the drop-side down.



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#### Next Visit: Nine-Month Well Child Check

At the next visit ...

- Your baby will be more independent! He will be more mobile. He will let you know what he thinks about everything from his foods to his bedtime!
- Your baby will have gained "object permanence." This means that she understands that an object or person exists in spite of not being available at the moment.
- You will start to have to set limits with your baby as they become more active. This may be wearing you out!
- Your baby will be very fearful of strangers.
- Your baby will be crawling and pulling herself to stand.
- Your baby will be using a wide variety of sounds and babbling more.
- Your baby will be starting to use his index finger to point to objects.

