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Well Child Care at 9 Months

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Feeding:

Your baby should continue having breast milk or infant formula until he is 1 year old. Most babies now take 6 to 8 ounces of formula 4 times a day. Encourage your child to drink water from a cup now. Two to four ounces per 24 hours is all that is needed. This is a good time to begin weaning from the bottle. Never allow your baby to keep the bottle between meal times. Find something else that helps comfort your baby. You can begin adding ground meat to your child's diet if your family eats meat.

By now, many children have 2 or more teeth. After meals and before bedtime, try to wash off the teeth with a clean cloth. Don't worry too much about getting every last bit off the teeth. Try to make this a fun time for your baby. Avoid cookies and crackers like goldfish. These have a habit of caking on your child's teeth and promoting tooth decay.

Development and Behavior:

- Babies are starting to pull themselves up to stand. They love to bang things together to make sounds. Soon, they may start to say "dada" and "mama".
- At this age babies learn what "no" means. Say "no" calmly and firmly and either take away the item that your child should not be playing with or remove him from the situation. If your child continues to do what you told him not to do, you can put your baby in a playpen for 1 minute without any toys or attention from you. It is a good idea to be both gentle and firmly in control. It is counter-productive to yell.
- Give your baby a choice of toys. Talk to him about the toy he chooses and what he is doing with the toy. Peek-a-boo is a favorite game.
- 9-month-olds have a lot of energy and it requires a lot of energy to take care of them. Make sure you get enough rest. Ask friends and family for help so you can take a break and rest. If you are rested, you will be better able to take care of your child.

Sleep: A regular bedtime hour and routine are important. Babies enjoy looking at picture books. You may want to read one regularly with your child. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal may help your baby feel secure at bedtime. Never put your baby in bed with a bottle. Put your baby to bed awake, but drowsy. If your baby wakes up a lot at night, ask your doctor for advice.

Shoes: Shoes protect your child's feet, but are not necessary when your child is learning to walk inside. When your child finally needs shoes, choose a flexible sole tennis shoe or moccasin.

Safety tips

Car Seat Safety: Refer to the manual to your child's car seat to determine if it is time for a new car seat. Infants and children should be rear-facing for as long as the car seat will allow. For more information, you can visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Avoid foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts).
- Cut food into small pieces.
- Store toys in a chest without a dropping lid.

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Practice your fire escape plan.
- Check your smoke detector to make sure it is working.
- Put plastic covers in unused electric outlets.
- Keep hot appliances and cords out of reach.
- Keep all electrical appliances out of the bathroom.
- Don't cook when your child is at your feet.
- Use the back burners on the stove with the pan handles out of reach.
- Keep hot foods and liquids out of reach.
- Turn the water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

Prevent Drowning

- Never leave an infant or toddler in a bathtub alone - **NEVER**.
- Continuously supervise your baby around any water, including toilets and buckets. Infants can drown in a bucket that has water in it. Empty all water and store buckets turned over.

Avoid Falls

- Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.
- Don't underestimate your child's ability to climb.

Prevent Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and gardening chemicals locked away or disposed of safely.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- Keep the poison center number on all phones.

Avoid Cuts

- Remove or pad furniture with sharp corners.
- Keep sharp objects out of reach.

Home-made Baby Foods

If you prefer to make your own baby food instead of buying the ready-made kinds on the grocery shelf, you'll find it's easy.

Some advantages of home-made baby foods are:

They cost less than most commercial baby foods.

They can be made thick or thin to suit your baby. Commercial Baby foods are often too thin for older babies.

They can be familiar foods, simply prepared, without sugar, salt, tapioca or starch, all of which are added to some commercial foods. Babies can eat some of the same foods you prepare for other members of the family, with very little change.

The baby is introduced to foods that taste more like the table foods soon to be eaten.

It is not necessary to buy expensive equipment. Lower cost items including a manual food mill, a strainer and a manual baby food grinder give good results. Your baby may begin to eat many foods prepared for the family at six to eight months of age. Begin by preparing vegetables, advancing to fruits, cereal products and later meats. When the family has a well balanced diet from all the food groups, the baby will have little trouble learning to eat and enjoy nutritious foods.

Important points to remember when preparing baby food

- 1 Start with good quality organic food that has been stored in clean containers at temperature no higher than 40 degrees (4 C). Vegetables should be fresh when purchased and used within two days.
- 2 Wash hands and all equipment in hot, soapy water, and rinse well before food preparation. Take food grinders apart after each use and wash each part thoroughly. Dry before putting together again. Kitchen counters and cutting boards, if used, should be washed down daily with a chloride bleach solution, then rinsed well with clean water.
- 3 Follow principles of good cookery:
 - a. Cook only until tender, no longer
 - b. Use only a small amount of water for cooking
 - c. Cover the pan
 - d. Save cooking liquid for thinning the food
- 4 **CAUTION:** If a strainer is used, it must be in good condition with no danger that small bits of mesh break off into the food.
- 5 Store food that is not used in the refrigerator, in a clean, covered container. Refrigeration temperature should not be higher than 40 degrees (4 C).
- 6 Use prepared refrigerated foods within 2 days.
- 7 Heat only the amount that may be used at one feeding. If you heat too much, do not force the baby to eat it. **Discard the leftovers.**

Babies generally do not like extreme temperatures. Make sure the food is not too hot or too cold.
- 8 When you prepare the same food for the rest of the family, take out the baby's portion before adding seasonings.
- 9 Avoid making food with root vegetables unless you know the nitrate concentration of the soil where it was grown.

Baby food should not contain salt, pepper, seasoning salts, spices, catsup, mustard, bullion cubes, soy sauce, refined sugar, brown sugar, honey, syrup, molasses, jam, jelly, candy, cocoa, dietetic foods, lunch meats, Kool-Aid, soda, gelatin, sweet cookies, bacon, hot dogs, slated crackers, pretzels, chips, French fries, ham, artificial sweeteners, or imitation dairy products. Convenience foods high in salt, sugar or seasonings should also be avoided.

Home-made baby foods freeze nicely. Pour into individual plastic ice cube containers. When frozen, pop out of containers into a plastic bag and store in the freezer. To serve, remove a cube and heat it in a saucepan over low heat. Freezer temperatures should be at 0 degrees F (-18 C) or lower. Use frozen baby foods within 1 month.

Next Visit: Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 12 months. Please bring your shot card.