

PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES OF SPRINGFIELD, INC

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NINE-MONTH CHECK-UP

DIET: Breast-fed infants are now nursing 4-6 times a day while formula-fed babies are taking 20-32 ounces a day. “Next-step” or toddler formulas are not recommended. Weaning from the bottle to the cup is ideal now. Most children should be off the bottle by 12-15 months of age. Small amounts of water may be offered in the cup. Juice has no significant nutritional value for children, and should be reserved for special occasions if offered at all.

Babies need fluoride drops if the home water supply is not fluoridated. Breast-fed babies should continue their Poly-vi-sol with Iron, 1 dropper a day until weaned. Babies receiving less than 32 ounces of formula a day should continue vitamin D, 400 iU/day. Babies who receive both breast milk and formula need only the Poly-vi-sol.

Many babies are ready for table foods now, especially finger foods they can feed themselves. They “chew” by mashing soft, small pieces of food between their gums so that teeth are not necessary. You may test new foods by mashing small pieces between your finger and thumb and offering this to your child. They should eat in a high chair or booster chair. A child who eats while playing may trip and choke. Do not allow your child to stuff many pieces of food in his mouth at once, as this may also result in choking.

Eating habits established now will last a lifetime. A balanced diet with twice as many servings of vegetables and fruits as carbohydrates (breads, noodles, potatoes, cookies, crackers) is very important. One plant protein and one animal protein are recommended daily. Preserved meats (for example, bacon, sausage, ham, and lunchmeat) are associated with cancer risk; nitrate-free is preferred if you wish to feed these types of meat to your child. Soft cheeses should be avoided just like honey until a year of age due to infection risk. Sugary foods, even those that contain fruit or juice, should be rare treats. About one-third of a child’s calories at this age should come from fat such as in whole milk.

Avoid using food to calm an upset or bored child as this can lead to obesity.

New foods may be offered now as often as once a week. Any nutritious food may be started except foods that pose choking hazards (for example, hard foods such as nuts and popcorn). Large amounts of high acid foods (for example, strawberries, citrus, tomatoes) may cause diaper rashes.

Current research suggests that introducing common allergenic foods (peanut butter, whole egg, fish, soy and dairy) at this age may decrease future risk of developing food allergy. Dairy (eg, yogurt) should be offered only a few times a week until age one. Mercury concerns limit offering canned tuna, canned salmon and wild salmon to once a week but farm-raised salmon to monthly. Tilapia and catfish do not have mercury issues.

DEVELOPMENT: Crawling, pulling up, walking while holding onto furniture, and trying to climb are only the beginning of the changes in this period. Babies often wave “bye”, recognize words and enjoy board or cloth books at this age. Reading to babies is very important. It is beneficial to their development, their later appreciation of books, and parent-child interaction.

SLEEP: This is an excellent time to build good sleep habits. Although most babies wake up several times a night, they can learn to put themselves back to sleep alone with the right preparation. You can expect most babies to sleep through the night at this age.

ILLNESS: Many illnesses are caused by viruses and are best treated by keeping the child comfortable while the body heals itself over several days. Fever (rectal temperature over 100.4) is one of the ways the body fights illness. How the baby seems to feel is much more important than the degree of fever. A baby who has a rectal temperature over 104, fever more than three days, difficulty breathing, or irritability or lethargy even when the fever has gone down should be seen in the office promptly. A child with fever or pain can be helped to feel more comfortable with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Dosage charts are included under the Parent Resources tab of this website.

The symptoms of minor respiratory infections often improve with the use of a vaporizer or humidifier in the baby’s room, elevating the head of the bed and diluting nasal mucus with saline mist at least every two hours while the baby is awake. “Cold” medicines may have serious side effects in this age group and are ineffective. Call the office for difficulty breathing, severe

coughing, marked irritability or persistent fever. Otherwise, “cold” symptoms usually clear in about 7-10 days. Please note that discolored mucus is usually a sign of drying mucus and represents a normal stage of a viral upper respiratory infection (not a bacterial infection).

Vomiting and diarrhea illness is also common in infants and children. Mild diarrhea alone is best managed with limiting juices, fruits and sweets (including non-sugar sweeteners) and increasing starchy foods in the diet. Lactinex probiotic supplement twice a day is helpful with virus or antibiotic-induced diarrhea. Diarrhea with frequent vomiting should be managed more strictly by limiting intake to oral rehydration solutions such as Pedialyte. While not as tasty as Sprite or Gatorade, Pedialyte has the same salt, sugar and water proportions as the body and prevents imbalances that can lead to seizures. Giving a spoonful or two every few minutes is most effective. The amount may be increased gradually as tolerated. Please call the office if Pedialyte is needed for more than 24 hours.

Regular exposure to cigarette smoke is harmful for your infant and contributes to ear infections, colds, asthma, crib death and later cancer. The American Cancer Society can provide information on stop-smoking programs.

When planning a trip away from your child, please leave a letter with her caregivers including medical conditions, past surgeries, current medications, allergies and immunizations as well as a copy of your insurance card.

SAFETY: As always, anticipation of new skills will help you protect your child. Babies are becoming more active and are more likely to be injured at this age. Electrical and thermal burns, poisonings, and falling down stairs or onto sharp objects are the most common types of accidents at home. Many of these are serious, some are even fatal, and most are preventable. It is helpful to go through the house on your hands and knees at “kid-level” to look for dangerous situations. Sockets should be covered, cords should be tucked out of the way, and gates should be used where there are steps. Do not trust “child-proof” caps on medications. Many ingestions involve medications taken from mom’s or grandma’s purse. All chemicals, including medications and cleaning products, should be placed out of reach or preferably, behind locked doors. Pot handles should be turned in so children will not pull them down. Watch for hot liquids on a table, clothing irons, flat irons, space heaters, woodstoves and fireplaces. Steam from

vaporizers can burn a child who gets too close. Keep bathroom doors shut and toilet lids closed. Pads for coffee table and hearth corners can help prevent lacerations. Baby “walkers” with wheels are associated with several types of injuries and are not recommended. A link to the recall website is included under the Parent Resources tab of this website.

Please use an approved car seat for all car and plane trips. Harness straps should come out at shoulder level. If the straps are below your baby’s shoulder, it is time to move up to a “convertible seat” that will stay in the rear-facing position until age 2.

Please note the phone number for poison control on all your phones.
POISON CONTROL CENTER (800) 392-9111

IMMUNIZATIONS: Any vaccines not given at six months (such as Hepatitis B or polio) may be given now. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen will help side effects such as fever, fussiness, or redness/discomfort at the injection site. If your baby has fever more than 24 hours, acts “limp” or “lifeless”, or seems extremely fussy, please let us know immediately. If you obtain your child’s vaccines elsewhere, please fax or bring the records.

OFFICE CALLS: When calling for advice, please have your questions organized with a pencil and paper handy. If the baby is ill, please take the baby’s temperature before calling (no need to add a degree). Routine calls should be made during regular weekday office hours. Emergency calls may be placed through the office number whenever we are not in the office.

APPOINTMENTS: Preventive care visits (well child check-ups) are an essential part of your baby’s health. These are an opportunity to discuss changes and concerns about diet, sleep, developing skills, safety, and immunization issues. The next few visits at this age will be at 12 months, 15 months and 18 months. Please see the Appointments page of this website for details on scheduling well and sick visits.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Office (417) 882-1600

After hours (877) 599-8962

Fax (417) 631-0119

Poison Control (800) 392-9111