

# My Nine-Month Old & Me

## Recommendations from Your Pediatrician

*"She is crawling everywhere and I can't keep up!"*

At 9 months, your baby has developed many new skills:

**Crawling-** Your baby may initially "scoot" or "army crawl" to get around. Some babies even roll to get places. Seeing your baby crawl is an exciting time but it can also be an exhausting time. She must be more closely monitored now that she is mobile because she can get into a cabinet or put something dangerous in her mouth in a split second.

**Pulls to a stand-** Now that your baby is sitting without support she wants to go the next step. She will start to pull herself to a standing position with assistance from mom or dad, furniture or while she's in her crib.

**Cruising-** Once your baby is standing she will walk with assistance. She may use the coffee table or your hand to help support herself while she is learning to walk!

**Babbling-** She will make even more sounds such as "da," "ba," and "ga." She may be saying mama and dada indiscreetly. Your baby will know at one year of age that using mama is for "mom" and dada is for "dad".

**Pincher Grasp-** While your baby has been using several fingers to "rake" or pick up small objects, your baby will develop a pincher grasp or the skill of using his index finger and thumb to pick up small objects.

### Ideas for Play

**Patty Cake-** Singing patty cake games are not only fun for your baby but they will stimulate his memory and social skills.

**Peek-a-boo-** As your baby learns object permanence (knowing objects still exist even when out of sight) you can play variations of peek-a-boo. For example, drape a cloth over her head and ask, "Where's the baby?" Once she understands the game she'll pull off the cloth and pop up grinning!

**Read books daily-** Make reading a part of the daily routine whether it occurs during the day or before bedtime. Reading stimulates your baby's brain while learning new words and objects.

Encourage gross motor skills – hold a favorite toy just out of reach. Try to get your baby to walk along the crib or furniture to get the toy.

### Sleeping

Your baby should have 10-12 hours of uninterrupted sleep at nighttime with two naps during the day. The morning nap usually lasts 1 ½ hours. The afternoon nap should be longer lasting 1 ½ to 2 hours and not too late in the day where it hinders falling asleep for bedtime. Although your baby may have been sleeping well through the night, at 9 months, with her newly developed mobility, your baby may start to wake up again in the middle of the night. Your baby is not hungry and does not need a bottle at this time. Encourage transitional objects to help your baby learn to self-soothe and fall asleep on his own. (See section on Separation Anxiety) If your baby is not already sleeping in his own crib through the night, teach her to do this now. The longer you wait, the harder it is on you and your baby.

### Feeding Baby

- Formula or breastfeeding should still be the staple of your child's diet. Rice cereal and other solids should not replace bottles. Your baby should be taking 20-32oz of formula or breastmilk per day.
- Continue rice cereal 4-6 Tbsp twice a day. It is ok to give oatmeal or mixed cereals if your child prefers. This is an important source of iron especially if your baby is exclusively breastfed.
- Continue to introduce pureed or mashed solids. Remember it is best to introduce a new food every 3-4 days so you can monitor for rashes or upset stomach which may be a sign of food allergy.
- It is okay to try- eggs, peanut butter, citrus fruits and shellfish/shrimp and honey.
- It is safe to introduce meats now (ground chicken, beef, or fish). Stage 3 foods have some meat products.
- Start to introduce a sippy cup. It is okay to start with water but also offer your expressed breastmilk or formula. It will make the transition off the bottle at age 1 easier if your child has had exposure to both milk and water in his sippy cup.
- Remember your baby is still too young for many foods that are choking hazards such as popcorn, peanuts, and hotdogs.
- If your baby has a nice pincher grasp (ability to pick up an item with thumb and index finger), they may begin finger foods. Gerber Graduate fruits and veggie puffs are a good starting point.
- Your Baby does not need juice. It is ok to give a couple of ounces a day of prune or apple juice for constipation, but do not give more than 4 ounces once a day. More than 4 ounces per day will cause cavities once the teeth erupt. Do NOT dilute the juice in water and give all day as this will also cause cavities.

Teething-New teeth usually start to pop up around 6 months so your baby may have his first teeth already. The first to appear are the central incisors or the two bottom front teeth. These

are usually followed by the four upper teeth (central and lateral incisors). Teething occasionally causes irritability, crying, low grade fever (usually not over 101), excessive drooling and a desire to chew on something. Rubbing your baby's gums may help ease her discomfort. Infant Motrin (ibuprofen) also may help with the inflammation. Start to brush her teeth with a child's soft toothbrush or wipe them with gauze at the end of the day to prevent cavities.

Separation Anxiety- While up until this point, your baby has calmly interacted with all people including strangers. She has now reached an important emotional developmental milestone. She may become anxious around strangers and "clingy" to you even around relatives and frequent babysitters. This is very normal behavior. Your child has started to realize, as with her new understanding of object permanence, that there is only one of you and when you're not around, you are somewhere without her. She may even refuse to fall asleep or wake up in the middle of the night searching for you. During this time, encourage your child to adopt a transitional object such as a blanket or stuffed animal to help soothe herself back to sleep. Separation anxiety usually peaks around 10-18 months and fades during the latter half of the second year.

#### Safety Tips for Your Home

Baby Walkers, contrary to their name, do not help your child learn to walk earlier. They do help strengthen the muscles in the lower legs; however, they do not strengthen the muscles of the upper legs or hips which are used more for walking. In addition, they are a serious safety hazard as they can easily tip over if your child bumps into an obstacle such as a toy or throw rug.

Use a Rear-Facing Car Seat in the back seat until your baby is one year old and 20 pounds. You may need to use a convertible car seat if the shoulder straps are below the level of the shoulders (on the back), but keep it facing the rear of the car until one-year of age. The local fire department will help you put in the new car seat securely.

Make sure to Baby Proof your home. Here is a reminder checklist of things to do:

- Safety-lock cabinet doors
- Prevent access to stairs with baby gates.
- Put plastic plug covers in outlets.
- Never leave a mop bucket or containers of water around for even a short time. It only takes a moment to drown.
- Put self-locking gate around swimming pool.
- Do not leave "kiddy pools" filled.
- Remove coins and toys with small parts from floor.
- Lower crib mattress (if not already lowered).
- Secure pictures or mirrors above changing table.
- Post the Poison Control # 1-800-222-1222 on the refrigerator and phones.