

Nutrition

Your child's diet should be expanding at this age. This is a good time to teach your child to enjoy eating healthy food. There are very few inborn taste preferences; almost all young children can be taught to accept and enjoy a variety of healthy foods. At this age the most important factor in food acceptance is repeated exposure. Babies prefer familiar foods. Rejection of a new food is normal. Studies indicate that vegetable intake in toddlers was doubled after 5 to 10 exposures to each vegetable. Ignore the faces your baby makes upon trying a new food. Try again later. Keep trying.

- **Liquid Intake.** Continue to feed your baby breast milk or an iron-fortified formula until at least 12 months of age. Wait until 12 months of age to introduce cow's milk.
- **Breast-feeding.** Breast-fed infants usually nurse 4 to 6 times a day. Try to substitute an activity such as a bed-time story for your baby's good night routine, rather than nursing to sleep. Now that your child is getting teeth, frequent nursing during the night can lead to cavities during the toddler and preschool years. Continue to breast-feed your baby until a year of age if possible.
- **Formula-feeding.** The average amount of formula taken per day at 9 months is 24-35 ounces. By 12 months, 18 ounces a day is sufficient. Do not let your child go to sleep with a bottle, this can cause cavities. Read a story or look through a book with your baby at bedtime.
- **Water/Juices.** Offer water in a cup between meals if your baby seems thirsty. Learning to like water is a good habit to start at this age. Juices are not needed at this age, but if you give your baby juice, offer it in a cup not a bottle. No more than 4 ounces of juice a day should be given. Excessive juice intake can cause diarrhea, excess gas, tooth decay, diarrhea, and poor nutrition.
- **Cup Training.** Work towards a goal of discontinuing the bottle at 12 months.

Solids

- **Meals.** Your baby should have 3 well-balanced meals a day at this age. At this age your baby should be able to eat junior foods and even mashed table food. Table food should be nutritious, not spicy or greasy. Most babies this age will take 6-8 ounces ($\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup) of solids per meal, but there is a tremendous amount of normal variation among babies. If your baby is healthy and growing well, do not worry about the exact amount your baby is eating.
- **Snacks.** Between meal snacks should be nutritious. If your baby is thirsty between meals give him extra water.
- **Cereals.** One serving a day of an iron-fortified infant cereal provide excellent iron supplementation. A serving is considered 4 tablespoons (2 ounces, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of dry cereal. Infant cereals are an important source of iron for your baby during this period of rapid growth and a changing diet, especially if your baby does not eat other iron containing foods well.
- **Fruits and Vegetables.** Make sure that your baby is given at least 2 to 3 servings each of both fruits and vegetables a day. For most babies a serving is about 2 ounces ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup or 4 tablespoons) of the jar baby food or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (4 tablespoons) of cooked vegetables or fruit. Although you may feed your baby mashed bananas or other soft fruits, most fruits and vegetables should be cooked until they are soft.

This is a good time to start the "Five a Day" rule. The "Five a Day" rule refers to a basic recommendation by nutrition experts that everyone should eat a total of at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

- **Meat, Mashed Beans and Eggs (protein-rich foods).** Your baby should have one to two servings of protein-rich foods a day. A serving is generally around two ounces ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup or 4 tablespoons). Jar baby-food meats are fine; other forms of meat have to be minced into tiny pieces before being given to your baby. Eggs are a good source of protein.
- **Finger Foods.** Now that your baby has a good pincer-grasp and can pick up small bits of food, she will enjoy feeding herself. Finger foods for babies include: crunchy toast, dry unsweetened cereals (like Cheerios), small bits of chicken, well-cooked pasta, scrambled eggs, small slices of cheese, small pieces of banana or other soft fruits, and crackers. Always supervise eating.
- **Spoon-feeding.** Give your baby his own spoon and let him play with it at mealtimes. Dip his spoon into his food and let him try to feed himself. Don't expect much success in the beginning. You will still need to spoon-feed your child for quite a while. He may not truly be able to use a spoon on his own until well after his first birthday.

Healthy Eating Habits for the Entire Family

As your child gradually transitions to the more varied diet that includes table food, it is important that you evaluate your own diet. You will be your toddler's role model. What food you eat and what food you serve will be critical in helping your child develop healthy eating habits.

- Eating habit surveys of children 4 to 24 months showed disturbing trends occurring as children transition from baby food to table food.
- Unfortunately toddlers are less likely to eat fruits and vegetables than infants. Another disturbing trend is that children between 9 months and 2 years are eating high-calorie, low nutrient foods, such as French fries, sodas, chips, and candy, with great regularity.

- In one large survey, on the day the children were studied, twenty five percent of children under two did not eat a fruit and one-third did not eat a vegetable. Even more disappointing is that 10% of the infants 9 to 11 months old ate French fries on the day of the survey, as did 20% of the 19-24 month olds.
- Parents need to make sure that the entire family is provided with nutritious food at every meal. Aim for five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Offer nutritious snacks to your children. Set a good example for your child. Eating habits formed during this critical phase may set the stage for food and nutrition choices well into adulthood and affect long-term health.

Development

- **Gross Motor (Movement) Skills.**
 - **Sitting.** By nine months most babies can get themselves into a sitting position without help, and can sit well balanced for extended periods. You may still need to arrange cushions or other padding around your baby as he sits. Your baby may still topple over as he reaches for items or gestures wildly. Don't leave your baby unsupervised, even for a moment. Little arms can get caught in odd positions, preventing your baby from rolling normally. Babies this age can still smother themselves accidentally.
 - **Crawling.** Most, but not all, babies can crawl by nine months. Some babies never learn to crawl; they scoot on their bottoms or slither on their stomachs. As long as your baby is learning to coordinate each side of her body and is using each arm and leg equally, there is no cause for concern. If you feel that your baby is not learning to move normally please discuss your concerns with your baby's doctor.
 - **Pulling to Stand and "Cruising."** After crawling is mastered your baby will next learn to pull himself up to a standing position using the bars of a crib, furniture, you, or whatever is handy. The next few weeks are then spent learning how to lower himself back down to sitting. Within a month after your baby masters pulling to stand, he will cruise about the room holding onto objects such as furniture. Consider the furnishings and potential dangers for your baby as he becomes mobile. Remove tall flimsy objects, dangling cords, and hazardous pieces with sharp edges. Do not buy your baby a walker. Walkers can slow development of your baby's upper thighs and hips, and they can be dangerous. Again, your baby needs constant supervision.
 - **Walking.** The average baby walks without assistance at around 12 months of age. Although it can take as long as 15-18 months to master this skill.
- **Fine Motor (Finger and Hand) Skills.** By 9 months most babies have mastered at least a crude pincer grasp (picking up small objects with thumb and two opposing fingers). The next task for those little hands to learn is how to let go of the objects they grasp. At first, she will press the object against a flat surface and uncurl her fingers. Then by 10 or 11 months, most babies will learn to uncurl their fingers in mid-air and drop objects. Now the fun begins! She will practice this new skill constantly and those around her will be picking up toys, food, and whatever else she can get her hands on. Towards the end of the first year, this constant intentional dropping will give way to deliberate throwing and to an equally deliberate placing of small objects. You will need to supply her with a small soft object, like a ball, to throw and objects to place such as block and stacking rings. She will enjoy filling and emptying all sorts of containers.
- **Language.** Your baby probably does not speak true words yet, but she is learning about language. Early sound-making is a playful and enjoyable activity. Babies learn speech and language from those people who care for them and play with them. Talk directly to your baby. Uninterrupted one-on-one conversations are important to a baby's language development. Babies learn the meaning of words by hearing them over and over again in different sentences with varying tones of voice, facial expressions and body language from the speaker.
 - At six months, most babies are vocalizing single-syllable sounds such as "maaaa" and "boooo." By nine months, vocal control improves and repetitive two syllable sounds, such as "baba" and "mama" are heard. This is babbling. You will hear long strings of varied syllables with variable inflections. As you listen you will hear questions, exclamations and even jokes. This meaningful-sounding nonsense language is often referred to as jargon.
 - Most babies say their first real word by 10 to 12 months of age, but don't be too obsessed by when their first word occurs. Expressive, varied jargon, especially if accompanied by gestures such as pointing, is good evidence that language is developing. Forming spoken words is not easy and occurs after much language development has occurred.
- **Toys for a 9 to 12 month old.** Stacking toys, cups, pails, other unbreakable containers, unbreakable mirrors, bath toys that float or hold water, large building blocks, squeeze toys, large dolls, cars, trucks (vehicle toys should be made of flexible plastic without sharp edges or removable parts), balls (must be too large to fit into mouth), cardboard books with large pictures, music boxes, musical toys, push-pull toys, toy telephones.
- **Social and Emotional Development.**

- Your baby will be open, affectionate, and outgoing with you, but anxious, clinging and easily frightened around unfamiliar people or objects. This is called separation anxiety or stranger anxiety, and is a normal emotional phase. Some people may say that child is fearful because you are spoiling him. Don't believe it. Separation anxiety is a sign of a healthy relationship with you.
- Separation anxiety usually peaks between 10 and 18 months, and then fades as your child approaches 2 years of age. This is usually both a tender and a painful phase for parents, especially mothers. You feel flattered to be so loved, but may also feel suffocated by his clinging or guilty when you must leave. Fortunately, this phase will not last forever
 - Suggestions that may help:
 - Your baby is more susceptible to separation anxiety when he's tired, hungry, or sick. Schedule your departure after your baby has napped and eaten and stay with him when he is sick.
 - Don't make a fuss when you are leaving. Have the caretaker create a distraction, such as a toy. Then say good-bye and leave quickly. His tears will subside after you leave.
 - When you drop your child off at the sitter's or a child-care center, spend a few minutes playing with her in this new environment. When you leave, reassure him that you'll be back.
- **Sleep.** Most nine month olds sleep around 11 hours overnight and have 2 naps (morning and afternoon) of 1 to 2 hours each for a total of 13 to 14 hours of sleep in a 24 hour day. Even babies who were sleeping through the night may wake up at this age. This is normal and considered part of separation anxiety.
 - **Tips to Prevent Sleep Problems:**
 - Have a soothing bedtime routine such as bath, bedtime story, and saying goodnight to family and favorite objects. The late evening breast-feeding or bottle should not be right at bedtime.
 - Your baby should be able to fall asleep on his own. Place him in his crib awake but drowsy.
 - A small soft friendly toy tucked into the corner of the crib may help with separation anxiety.
 - Responding to your child's separation fears by holding him and reassuring him during the day will help also.
 - Make middle of the night contacts brief and boring. Your baby should not need middle of the night feedings at this age.
- **Dental Tips.** As soon as teeth begin to erupt, start brushing twice daily using a toothpaste with fluoride and a soft small toothbrush. Use a small smear of toothpaste to brush teeth of a child less than 2 years of age. For more information visit the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's website: www.aapd.org.

Safety

Thousands of children age 6 – 12 months have serious accidental injuries every year - most of which can be prevented. Most often injuries occur because parents are not aware of what their child can do. Motor development is rapid in this age group. Constant supervision is needed. This is a good age to use a playpen or a pack-n-play for times like cooking, when it is difficult to watch your child or have them next to you.

- **Poisoning.** Children are very curious, which can lead them to getting a hold of dangerous household detergents and other poisonous materials. If your child should ingest a poison, call the Poison Center Network, 1-800-222-1222. Post this number near your phone. In the case of convulsions, cessation of breathing or unconsciousness, call 911.
 - **The following information will be important:**
 1. The name of the poison
 2. The amount ingested
 3. The time it was ingested
 4. Any symptoms
 5. The age and weight of your child
 - **Things to Remember:**
 - Read labels and warnings on all containers
 - Store potentially harmful products and medicines out of reach of children
 - Throw away unused medications and empty containers.
 - Do not put potentially harmful substances in food or drink containers.
 - Teach children to stay away from storage areas and medicine cabinets.
 - Use child-protective safety latches and guards on doors, drawers, cabinets, etc.
 - Avoid calling any medicines "candy."

- **Home Safety.** Now that your child is mobile, it is important to childproof her environment. Remove crib gyms and other hanging toys at 6 months. Keep all medicines and cleaning supplies well out of reach and equip all cabinets with safety latches. Everything your child finds will probably end up in her mouth, so be careful what is left lying around.
- **Falls.** As your child's strength and curiosity grows, it is important to place gates on stairways and other potentially dangerous areas. Also, remove or cushion any sharp edged furniture, just in case your child falls against it. Coffee tables and fireplaces seem to cause the most injuries. Make sure that your baby is strapped in properly at all times when in a stroller, high chair, car safety seat, or infant carrier.
- **Car Safety.** Most injuries and deaths caused by car crashes can be prevented by the use of safety seats every time your child is in the car. An infant should always sit in a rear-facing safety seat until he is at least 2 years of age. A rear-facing car seat should never be placed in front of a passenger-side air bag. The safest place for all children less than 12 years of age is in the back seat. For more information about car safety seats and for information about having your seat checked for proper installment call 1-800-252-8255 (safe riders program) or 1-866-SEAT-CHECK (www.seatcheck.org). Do not leave your child alone in a car, even for a "few seconds." Death and injuries from excessive heat or fumes can occur.
- **Burns.** There are a number of ways that your child could be burned.
 - At this age children grab at everything. Never leave cups of hot drinks on tables or counter edges. Never carry hot liquids or food near your child or while holding your child. Do not let your child crawl or walk around stoves, wall or floor heaters or other hot appliances. Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge so they are not reachable. A safe place for your child while you're cooking, eating, or unable to provide full attention is a playpen, high chair or crib.
 - Because children are just learning to grab at things, water can be a source of burns. Turn your water heater to 120 degrees.
 - Children are at greatest risk in house fires. Make sure that your smoke alarms work. Change the batteries at least twice a year on dates that you'll remember, like the day that time changes for Daylight Saving and Standard Time.
 - If your child does get burned, put cold water on the burned area immediately. Then cover the burn with a bandage or clean cloth. Call your doctor for all burns.
- **Sun Exposure.** Avoid the sun during the hours of 10 am to 4 pm. If outside stay in the shade, use a floppy hat to protect your baby's face, and use a sunscreen that is approved for children. Sun exposure during childhood can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin.
- **Walkers.** The AAP does not recommend using walkers. Walkers allow children to get to places they can pull heavy objects or hot foods onto themselves. Also, many children in baby walkers have had injuries from falling down stairs, walking out of doors, and running into furniture.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Programs

The State of Texas has a network of local community programs (Early Childhood Intervention or ECI) that provide services to Texas families and their children, birth to age three, with developmental delays. The cost of services provided is based on family income. Children are eligible for ECI services if they are under age 3 and have developmental delays or conditions (such as Down's, prematurity, vision or hearing impairments) that have a high possibility of resulting in a developmental delay. Anyone may refer a child for ECI services. If you believe that your child is delayed or has a condition that could lead to delays, call 1-800-682-5115 or visit the ECI website at www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis for the ECI program closest to you.

Reading Suggestions and Resources. We encourage all parents to invest in one or more reference book on child care and child development.

The following are a few books and websites that we can recommend:

- **Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5**, The American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age 5**, Penelope Leach.
- **Baby 411: Clear Answers and Smart Advice for Your Baby's First Year**, Ari Brown, Denise Fields.
- **Infants and Mothers: Differences in Development**, Terry Brazelton.
- **Siblings without Rivalry**, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, Avon Books.
- **Solve your Child's Sleep Problems**, Richard Ferber
- www.aap.org, The American Academy of Pediatrics
- www.cdc.gov/nip, National Immunization Program. Federal government sponsored online information about vaccines.
- www.vaccine.chop.edu, Information about vaccines from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- www.healthychildren.org, A new parenting website developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.