

6 Month Checkup



“My daughter preferred to breastfeed instead of eating food, so I started eating meals with her.

When she saw me eating, she wanted to eat too. Now she has the best of both worlds—breastmilk and healthy foods.”

—Kaiser Permanente Member

Your baby may be ready to ...

- turn towards sounds
- begin to say “dada” or “baba”
- sit with support
- pass a toy from hand to hand
- begin to feed him/herself

Feeding

- Continue breastfeeding until your baby is at least 12 months old. Breastfed babies get fewer colds and ear infections.
- Feed your baby plain solid foods at two or three meals a day.
- If you do not breastfeed, give your baby formula.
- Feed cereal from a spoon only, not from a bottle.
- Offer a new food to your baby every five to seven days. If your baby develops a rash, diarrhea, breathing problems, or gas, it may mean that he or she has a food or milk allergy.
- Let your baby decide how much to eat.
- Do not give your baby honey in the first year of life. Honey can make your baby sick.
- Juice is not recommended at this age. If you do give your baby juice, limit it to no more than 4 to 6 ounces of 100% whole fruit juice, served in a cup, not a bottle.

Healthy habits

- Protect your baby from whooping cough by making sure you and other family members and caregivers have had a recent Tdap booster shot. Whooping cough (also called pertussis) is a contagious disease that can be spread easily from person to person through coughing. It is very serious for babies. Whooping cough can cause them to stop breathing or to cough so much that they can't breathe.
- To protect your baby from the sun, try to stay in the shade, especially between 10 am and 4 pm. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA and UVB protection) with an SPF of at least 15. Cover him or her with a broad-brimmed hat, long sleeves and pants, and sunglasses with UV protection.

- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle. It can cause tooth decay.
- Play on the floor with your baby on his/her stomach. “Tummy time” helps your baby get stronger, and get ready to crawl.
- Clean your baby's teeth daily with water and a soft toothbrush or a damp washcloth. Do not use toothpaste until your child is 2 years old.
- Take your baby for walks.
- Children under 2 should not watch TV or videos. Too much TV may negatively affect early brain development.
- Don't smoke! Talk with your doctor or contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department if you would like to quit smoking.

Safety

- **Use the car seat for every ride.** Your baby should always ride in a rear-facing car seat properly installed in the back seat. If your baby is outgrowing her infant seat (approaching 20 pounds or her head is within one inch of the top of the seat), switch to a rear-facing convertible seat. If you have questions or need help installing your car seat, call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or visit seatcheck.org.
- **Avoid lead poisoning.** Tell your doctor if your child spends a lot of time in a house built before 1978.
- **Add the number of the Poison Control Center (1-800-876-4766) to your phone.**
- **Do not let your baby use a walker.** Walkers can easily tip over and lead to serious injury.
- **Keep the crib safe.** Remove bumper pads. Remove mobiles when your baby can push him/herself up on hands and knees.
- **Avoid burns.** Always check water temperature before putting your baby in the bath. Do not drink hot liquids when you are near your baby.

- **Babies who sleep with pacifiers during the first year may be less likely to experience SIDS (crib death).** Continue to offer your baby a pacifier at nap time and bed time.
- **Never leave your child unattended with any animal, even family pets.** Learn to recognize signs of aggression in your pets.
- Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, and test them regularly.

Bathroom safety

- Install safety latches on bathroom and kitchen cabinets, drawers, and toilet lids.
- Keep bathroom doors closed.
- Turn the water heater temperature down to low or warm (below 120° F).

Prevent drowning

- Do not leave buckets or containers of water or other liquids on the floor.
- Hot tubs and spas should have a locked cover.
- Swimming pools should be fenced on all sides with a self-latching gate.

Kitchen safety

- Turn pot handles towards the back of the stove when cooking.
- Use the back burners of the stove when cooking.

Avoid poisoning

- **Medicines.** Keep medicines, alcohol, cleaning products, and all other poisons in a locked cabinet, out of your child's reach and sight. Keep medicines in the original child-proof containers. Do not keep medicines or other drugs in your purse. Have visitors keep their purses out of reach.
- **Lead poisoning.** Avoid remodeling, drilling, sanding, or scraping walls if your house was built before 1978. Your paint may contain lead.
- **Other potential poisons.** Avoid using home remedies like Azarcon (Alarcon, Liga, Maria Luisa, Coral, Rueda), Greta, Pay-loo-ah, Bokhoor (galena), Al kohl, Bint al zahab, Farouk, Kushtas, Ghasard, Bala goli, Kandu or Surma.
- **Carbon monoxide poisoning.** Install carbon monoxide alarms near bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
- **Poisonous plants.** Remove all poisonous plants. Consult the Poison Control Center (1-800-876-4766) if you think your child has eaten any part of a plant.

Here is a partial list of some com-

mon plants that are poisonous:

Autumn Crocus; Begonia; Black Locust; Buttercups; Chrysanthemum; Dutchman's Breeches; English Ivy; Iris; Jerusalem Cherry; Common Moonseed; Peace Lily; Pothos; Tulips (Bulbs); Yew (Taxus species); Wisteria

Deadly plants:

Castor Bean; Jimson Weed; Nightshade; Oleander; Pokeweed

Safe plants:

African Violet; Boston Fern; Christmas Cactus; Coleus; Ficus; Firethorn; Hens and Chicks; Hibiscus; Jade; Norfolk Pine; Rubber Plant; Spider Plant; Yucca

Other resources

Web sites

Kaiser Permanente
kp.org
 American Academy of Pediatrics
healthychildren.org
 La Leche League International
lalecheleague.org
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/safeusa/poison
 Preventive Ounce
preventiveoz.org

Books

Baby Proofing Basics – Vicky Lansky
The Everything Baby's First Foods Book: Nutritious Meals and Snacks – Tarlov, et al.
Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 – American Academy of Pediatrics
Dr. Mom: A Guide to Baby and Child Care – Egeland, MD, Neifert, et al.
 Contact your local Health Education Department or Center.

Please share

this handout with anyone who takes care of your child.

The next checkup is when your baby is 12 months old.

Immunizations are recommended at the next visit. Your baby may also get a blood test.

Parenting

- Read books to your baby every day.
- Let your baby play in a safe place on the floor or in the playpen.
- Never leave your baby alone at home, in a car, or bath.
- If your baby is teething, try teething rings or gently rub your baby's gums.

Child-proofing checklist

Gun safety

- Unload all guns and keep them locked away.
- Keep the ammunition in a separate locked place.

Prevent falls

- Use child-proof window locks or guards on all windows above the first floor.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.

Prevent choking and strangulation

- Don't give your baby toys that have strings, cords, necklaces, or balloons. Also avoid toys that have small removable parts that may cause your baby to choke.
- Don't allow electrical or telephone cords to dangle within your baby's reach.
- Hang cords from drapes or blinds out of your baby's reach. Consult the Window Covering Safety Council (1-800-506-4636) for more information.

Electrical and fire safety

- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Put plastic safety plugs in all electrical outlets when you are not using them.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen. Have a fire escape/earthquake plan.
- Screen off fireplaces and other heat sources.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your child's physician or other health care professional. If your child has persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your child's doctor. If you have questions or need additional information about your child's medication, please speak to your pharmacist.