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Well Child Care at 6 Months

Feeding

The main food for your infant continues to be breast milk and/or formula until he is one year old. Never let the infant take a bottle lying down as this can cause ear infection. If you have not started baby food (solids) yet, please introduce iron fortified rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula given by spoon. Between 6-9 months, infants need to expand their solids including strained/pureed fruits, vegetables and finally cooked meats. You can use jarred baby foods or make your own using a blender or food grinder to puree fresh or frozen foods. Do not add extra sugar or salt. Provide your infant with a wide variety of new fruits (peaches, applesauce, bananas, plums, apricots, etc.) and vegetables (green beans, peas, carrots, squash, spinach, beets, etc.). Introduce a new food no more often than every 3 days to rule out any allergy. Do not let your own food likes and dislikes interfere with your infant's exposure to new foods. Remember - act as if everything is delicious! Increase the number of solid meals from 1 to 3 each day as your infant's interest and feeding skills advance. Usually infants take 3 solid meals in addition to breast milk and/or formula by 9 months of age. Position the infant in a high chair for his meals and be sure to strap him in securely.

Your infant will also enjoy learning to use a sipper cup/cup. Put a small amount of pumped breast milk, formula, juice or water in the cup to start with. You will need to hold the cup. Expect a lot of spills and spit outs.

The amount of foods infants consume is variable but some guidelines follow:

Breast milk 4-6 feedings/day on average

Iron fortified formula 26-40 oz. per day

Iron fortified infant cereal 4 tablespoons of dry cereal per day – less is fine.

Fruit juice from a <u>cup</u> No more than 3-4 oz. per day – less is fine.

Fruits, vegetables, meat, 2 tablespoons – ½ cup of each

starches (potatoes, pasta)

Avoid commercial baby food combination dinners and desserts as they are higher in calories and lower in nutrients. Also, do not give regular cow's milk until the infant is 1 year of age.

A fluoride supplement may also be recommended for breast-fed infants and formula fed infants who drink non-fluorinated water.

Development

At this age babies are usually rolling over and beginning to sit by themselves. Babies squeal, babble, laugh, and often cry very loudly. Then may be afraid of people they do not know. Be patient with your baby and meet your baby's needs quickly.

Here's what you might see your baby doing between 6 and 9 months of age.

Daily Activities

Your child:

- Adores playing with balls, rattles, and squeaky toys.
- Usually sleeps through the night.
- May prefer some foods to others.
- May enjoy playing with food.
- Loves games like "peek-a-boo," "patty cake," and "fetch".

Language Development

Your child:

- Babbles and squeals using single syllables.
- Loves to jabber.
- May recognize own name

Emotional Development

Your child

- May show sharp mood changes.
- Displays especially strong attachment to mother.
- Develops deeper attachment to father, siblings, and other familiar people.
- Distinguishes children from adults.
- Smiles at other children.
- May show fear of strangers.
- Continues to be intrigued with mirror image.

Motor Skills

Your child:

- · Rests on elbows.
- Begins to sit alone.
- Sits in high chair.
- Continues to use motions leading to crawling.
- Makes jumping motions when held in standing position.
- Reaches with one hand.
- Bats and grasps dangling objects.
- Holds objects between thumb and forefinger.
- Passes objects from one hand to another.

Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones.

Sleep

Six-month-olds may not want to be put in bed. A favorite blanket or stuffed animals may make bedtime easier. Develop a bedtime routine like playing a game, singing a lullaby, turning the lights out, and giving a goodnight kiss. Make the routine the same every night. Be calm and consistent with your baby at bedtime. If your baby is not sleeping through the night, ask your doctor for further information about preventing sleep problems.

Safety Tips

Avoid Choking and Suffocation

- Cords, ropes or strings around the baby's neck can choke him. Keep cords away from the crib.
- Keep all small, hard objects out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.
- Avoid foods on which a child might choke (such as candy, hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn).

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Develop and practice a fire escape plan.
- Purchase, install, and/or check your smoke detector.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Check food temperatures carefully, especially if foods have been heated in a microwave oven.
- Keep hot foods and liquids out of reach.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.
- Throw away cracked or fraved old electrical cords.
- Turn the water heater down to 120F (50C).

Avoid Falls

- Keep crib and playpen sides up.
- Avoid using walkers.
- Install safety gates to guard stairways.
- Lock doors to dangerous areas like the basement or garage.
- Check drawers, tall furniture, and lamps to make sure they can't fall over easily.

Prevent Poisoning

Keep the following out of reach or locked away:

- Medicine
- Vitamins
- Cleaning Supplies
- Plumbing Chemicals

- Gardening Chemicals Paints and Paint Thinners

The Poison Control number is 1-800-222-1222.

Next Visit

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 9 months.

Additional Health Resources

Virtual Children's Hospital - www.vh.org/vch http://kidshealth.org www.generalpediatrics.com

Credits:

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.aap.org

Health Informatics - http://uiowa.healthinformatics.net

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