

# Bright Futures Information for Parents: 6 Month Visit

**Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.**

## How Your Family Is Doing

If you are worried about your living or food situation, talk with your health care professional. Community agencies and programs such as WIC and SNAP can also provide information and assistance.

Don't smoke or use e-cigarettes. Keep your home and car smoke-free. Tobacco-free spaces keep children healthy.

Don't use alcohol or drugs.

Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.

Ask your health care professional questions about child care programs.

Talk with your health care professional or call for help if you feel sad or very tired for more than a few days.

Spend time with family and friends.

## Your Baby's Development

Place your baby so she is sitting up and can look around.

Talk with your baby by copying the sounds she makes.

Look at and read books together.

Play games such as peekaboo, patty-cake, and so big.

Don't have a TV on in the background or use a TV or other digital media to calm your baby.

If your baby is fussy, give her safe toys to hold and put into her mouth. Make sure she is getting regular naps and playtimes.

## Feeding Your Baby

Know that your baby's growth will slow down.

Be proud of yourself if you are still breastfeeding. Continue as long as you and your baby want.

Use an iron-fortified formula if you are formula feeding.

Begin to feed your baby solid food when he is ready.

Look for signs your baby is ready for solids. He will:

- Open his mouth for the spoon.
- Sit with support.
- Show good head and neck control.
- Be interested in foods you eat.

### **Starting New Foods**

Introduce one new food at a time.

Use foods with good sources of iron and zinc, such as:

- Iron- and zinc-fortified cereal
- Pureed red meat, such as beef or lamb

Introduce fruits and vegetables after your baby eats iron- and zinc-fortified cereal or pureed meat well.

Offer solid food 2 to 3 times per day; let him decide how much to eat.

Avoid raw honey or large chunks of food that could cause choking.

Consider introducing all other foods, including eggs and peanut butter, because research shows they may actually prevent individual food allergies.

To prevent choking, give your baby only very soft, small bites of finger foods.

Wash fruits and vegetables before serving.

Introduce your baby to a cup with water, breast milk, or formula.

Avoid feeding your baby too much; follow baby's signs of fullness, such as:

- Leaning back
- Turning away

Don't force your baby to eat or finish foods.

It may take 10 to 15 times of offering your baby a type of food to try before he likes it.

### **Healthy Teeth**

Ask your health care professional about the need for fluoride.

Clean gums and teeth (as soon as you see the first tooth) 2 times per day with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush and a small smear of fluoride toothpaste (no more than a grain of rice).

Don't give your baby a bottle in the crib. Never prop the bottle.

Don't use foods or juices that your baby sucks out of a pouch.

Don't share spoons or clean the pacifier in your mouth.

### **Safety**

Use a rear-facing-only car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.

Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag.

If your baby has reached the maximum height/weight allowed with your rear-facing-only car seat, you can use an approved convertible or 3-in-1 seat in the rear-facing position.

Put your baby to sleep on her back.

Choose crib with slats no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.

- Lower the crib mattress all the way.

Don't use a drop-side crib.

Don't put soft objects and loose bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys in the crib. If you choose to use a mesh playpen, get one made after February 28, 2013.

Do a home safety check (stair gates, barriers around space heaters, and covered electrical outlets).

Don't leave your baby alone in the tub, near water, or in high places such as changing tables, beds, and sofas.

Keep poisons, medicines, and cleaning supplies locked and out of your baby's sight and reach.

Put the Poison Help line number into all phones, including cell phones. Call your health care professional if you are worried your baby has swallowed something harmful.

Keep your baby in a high chair or playpen while you are in the kitchen.

Do not use a baby walker.

Keep small objects, cords, and latex balloons away from your baby.

Keep your baby out of the sun. When you do go out, put a hat on your baby and apply sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher on her exposed skin.

## What to Expect at Your Baby's 9 Month Visit

### We will talk about

- Caring for your baby, your family, and yourself
- Teaching and playing with your baby
- Disciplining your baby
- Introducing new foods and establishing a routine
- Keeping your baby safe at home and in the car

### Helpful Resources:

- Smoking Quit Line: 800-784-8669
- Poison Help Line: 800-222-1222
- Information About Car Safety Seats: [www.nhtsa.gov/parents-and-caregivers](http://www.nhtsa.gov/parents-and-caregivers)
- Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

**Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition**

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

**For more resources for families, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org/families>.**

The information contained in this webpage should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Original handout included as part of the *Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit*, 2nd Edition.

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