

Healthy Baby Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most babies will reach between now and 9 months old. Talk with your doctor at your baby's next well-visit if your baby is not yet reaching these milestones or there are skills your baby no longer shows each day.

Social and Emotional Milestones

- Is shy, clingy or fearful around strangers
- Shows several facial expressions, like happy, sad, angry or surprised
- Looks when you call their name
- Reacts when you leave (looks, reaches for you or cries)
- Smiles or laughs when you play peek-a-boo

Language and Communication Milestones

- Makes different sounds like "mamama" and "bababa"
- Lifts arms to be picked up

Thinking and Learning Milestones

- Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (like a spoon or toy)
- Bangs two things together

Physical Development Milestones

- Gets to a sitting position by themselves
- Moves things from one hand to the other hand
- Uses fingers to "rake" food toward themselves
- Sits without support

Healthy Ways to Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

Development

- Hold your baby up while they sit and learn to balance on their own. Encourage them by giving a toy to look at and letting them look around.
- Teach your baby social skills by copying your baby when they smile and make sounds.
- Point to things your baby looks at and name them (for example, a book, tree or cup). Talk with your baby by repeating the sounds they make.
- Sing and play music for your baby. Read together every day, pointing to items in the book and using simple words to talk about the pictures.
- Encourage your baby to crawl, scoot and roll on the ground by placing toys a little out of reach.

- Play games such as peek-a-boo and patty-cake.
- Hold and cuddle your baby often, giving praise and lots of loving attention.

Behavior

- If your baby becomes fussy, take a break from whatever you're doing and offer comfort. Help your baby learn to calm themselves by rocking, singing, sucking their fingers or a pacifier, or holding a favorite stuffed animal.

Feeding

- Breast milk or infant formula should continue to be your baby's main source of nutrition until 1 year of age.
- Look for signs your baby is ready for soft foods. Before eating soft foods, your baby should be able to sit with support, have good head and neck control, show interest in the foods you eat, and open their mouth for the spoon.
- When starting new foods, introduce one, single-ingredient food at a time. Wait 3–5 days before introducing another new food to make sure your baby doesn't have a reaction. Use a spoon to give food, and don't mix infant foods in the baby's bottle. Learn more about introducing solid foods to your baby, including appropriate beginner foods and portion sizes. *Scan the QR code*
- Introduce your baby to a cup with a small amount of water, breast milk or formula.

Teeth

- Clean your baby's gums and teeth twice a day with a soft cloth or toothbrush. Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, no more than a grain of rice.
- Avoid giving your baby a bottle in the crib. Never prop the bottle.
- Avoid juice.

Sleep

- Your baby may sleep 12–16 hours each night, with 2–3 naps during the day. Remember to lay your baby on its back to sleep.

- Calm or rock your baby before bed until they are tired. It is good for babies to be drowsy when put down for bedtime, but allow them to fall asleep on their own.
- Follow a nighttime routine to help your baby feel safe and secure before sleep.

Vehicle Safety

- Use a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of your vehicle. Learn more about car seat safety and installation. *Scan the QR code*
- Never leave your baby alone in a car. Develop safe habits that prevent you from forgetting your baby in the car, like putting your purse or cell phone in the back seat. Learn more about the dangers of hot cars and how to keep your child safe. *Scan the QR code*

Home Safety

- Learn first aid for choking and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Cover electrical outlets and block stairs with a small gate.
- Lock up medicines and cleaning supplies. Save the Poison Help Line number (1-800-222-1222) in all phones.
- Keep cords, latex balloons, plastic bags and small objects like coins, marbles and batteries away from your child.
- Never leave your baby alone in the tub, near water or in high places like a changing table, bed or couch.
- Your baby is becoming more active and learning to move. Don't wait to baby-proof your home. Learn more about home safety. *Scan the QR code*

Find more useful, healthy tips for your family:

Cincinnati Children's Blog

Visit: blog.cincinnatichildrens.org

Young & Healthy Podcast

Listen on:



This information is meant to support your visit with your child's doctor. It should not take the place of the advice of your pediatrician.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, 4th Edition* | American Academy of Pediatrics

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