



Important Points for the 6 Month Visit

Nutrition:

Most babies will double their birth weight by 5-6 months then slow in their growth rate to 1 lb per month for the next 6 months. Continue to breast feed or use formula for the first year of your baby's life. It is time to start introducing solids foods! Please see our feeding handout. It is also the time to begin introducing a sippy cup, as our goal is to eliminate the bottle by 12 months. Your baby may be getting ready to cut her first tooth and she may be "gnawing" on everything; a cool washcloth to chew on and frequent gum massage will help alleviate the gum pain. We do not generally recommend teething medications. When your baby's tooth erupts, it is important to wipe them with a washcloth twice a day. Fluoride toothpaste is not used until 2 years of age, but please inform us if your primary water is from a well.

Development:

Begins to speak single consonants like dada (sorry Mom), rolls both ways, object permanence, transfers objects from hand to hand, plays with objects in midline sight, rakes small objects with pinkie finger and palm, smiles, laughs, can sit supported, can bear weight when held in a standing position.

Touchpoints:

- At 6 months, your baby begins a process known as separation individuation where she begins to understand that she is a separate individual from you. She may exhibit behavior changes such as crying when you go into another room or even waking at night when she previously slept through. Do not feed her or rock her during this nighttime waking; simply pat her and let her know she is safe. This is the beginning of stranger awareness.
- Play games geared toward object permanence: peek-a-boo, pat a cake, cover and uncover his favorite toy.
- This is also the time where babies tend to catch their first cold. From this point on, the average child will have 6-10 colds per year. Remember your humidifier and normal saline. We need to see every child between 3 months and 2 years of age with a fever over 102.5 F within 24 hours. After 6 months of age it is OK to give Motrin (ibuprofen) for a temperature over 102.5; please refer to our "Fever is Your Friend" handout.

Safety:

- Child proofing the house takes priority at this time because your child is or will soon become mobile. Get down on your hands and knees to see from her perspective.
- Anything that can fit in a used toilet paper roll can occlude your baby's airway.
- Continue to use a rear facing car seat and never place your baby in the front passenger seat. You will not turn your baby forward until 2 years or older, or have outgrown weight or height limits for seat.
- Do not leave your baby alone in a tub of water, or on high places such as a changing table, bed or sofa. Never eat, drink or carry anything hot near or while you are holding the baby. Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees F.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check that they work properly every month. Keep the baby's environment free of smoke: no smoking in the home or car.

What to expect during this visit:

- Your baby will receive the following immunizations: Pentacel (DTaP, Hib, IPV), Prevnar, and oral Rotateq. We will also recommend the first of two flu shots if applicable.
- Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for 24-48 hours after getting the shots. Please refer to the "After the Shots" handout for specific instructions.
- We will discuss your baby's growth and development and any other concerns that you may have. Please prepare and bring in questions for your next visit at 9 months. If you are exclusively breastfeeding your baby we will check his hemoglobin level at the 9 month visit.