

INFANCY – 6 MONTHS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury and illness prevention

All infants should be in a rear facing car safety seat secured in the back seat. Your baby must remain in the car safety seat at all times during travel.

Continue to put your baby to sleep on their back or side.

Ensure that your baby's crib is safe. The slats should be no more than 2 3/8" apart, and the mattress should be firm and fit snugly into the crib. Keep the sides of the crib raised. Do not put your baby to sleep on a soft surface such as a waterbed, couch, or pillow.

Set hot water heater thermostat at less than 120° F.

Test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not hot before bathing your baby.

Empty buckets, tubs or small pools immediately after use. Ensure that swimming pools have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.

Continue to keep your baby's environment free of smoke. Keep your home and car nonsmoking zones.

Do not drink hot liquids or smoke while holding your baby.

Avoid overexposure to the sun.

Do not leave heavy objects or containers of hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that your baby may pull down.

Place plastic plugs in electrical sockets.

Install safety devices on drawers and cabinets where your baby may play.

Keep toys with small parts or other small or sharp objects out of reach.

Keep sharp objects (e.g., scissors, knives) out of reach.

Keep all poisonous substances, medicines, cleaning agents, health and beauty aids, and paints and paint solvents locked in a safe place out of your baby's sight and reach. Never store poisonous substances in empty jars or soda bottles.

Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Do not give your baby plastic bags, latex balloons, or small objects such as marbles.

Install gates at the top and bottom of stairs, and place safety devices on windows.

Lower the crib mattress.

Use a mesh playpen with weaves less than 1/4 inches apart.

Avoid dangling electrical and drapery cords.

Do not use a baby walker.

Learn first aid and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Recognize early signs of illness:

- Fever
- Failure to eat
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Unusual irritability, lethargy
- Cough
- Seizure
- Reaction to immunization

Nutrition

Continue to breastfeed or use iron-fortified formula for the first year of your baby's life. This milk will continue to be the major source of nutrition. If you are formula feeding, use an iron-fortified formula.

Introduce solid foods.

Some of the signs to watch for to decide if your baby is ready for solids:

- Opens mouth for the spoon
- Sits up with support
- Had good head and neck control
- Interest in the food you are eating

Use a spoon to give your baby an iron-fortified, single-grain cereal such as rice. If there is no adverse reaction, add a new pureed food to the diet each week, starting with fruits and vegetables and then meats. Offer 1-2 tablespoons of solid food 2-3 times per day.

Limit juice to 2-4 ounces a day.

Begin introducing a cup.

To prevent your baby from choking:
Give small bites of very soft finger foods.

Avoid foods that may cause allergies-----peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.

Always supervise your baby while they are eating.

Learn emergency procedures for choking.

Do not give your baby honey until after their first birthday to prevent infant botulism.

Ensure that your caregiver is feeding your baby appropriately.

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Oral health

To protect your baby's teeth, do not put them to bed with a bottle or prop it in their mouth.

Clean your baby's teeth with a soft brush, beginning with the eruption of their first tooth.

Give your baby fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the baby's drinking water.

Promotion of parent-infant interaction that is mutually enjoyable and satisfying

Encourage your baby's vocalizations. Talk to your baby during dressing, bathing, feeding, playing, walking, and driving.

Read to your baby. Play music.

Play social games such as pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, so-big.

Provide opportunities for exploration.

Establish a bedtime routine and other habits to discourage night awakening.

Encourage your baby to learn to console them self by putting them to bed awake, but drowsy.

Consistently provide your baby with the same comforting object - such as a stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite toy - so that they can console them self at bedtime or in new situations.

Encourage play with age-appropriate toys.

Discuss with the health professional any problems your baby is having with separation anxiety.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

Keep in contact with friends and family members. Avoid social isolation.

Continue to meet the needs of other children in the family, including them appropriately in the care of your baby.

Discuss with the health professional your child care arrangements and working hours. Also talk about availability of time for close interaction with the infant and about fatigue.

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g., WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider attending parent-child play groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations or resources.