

CORINTH FAMILY MEDICINE & PEDIATRICS

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9 MONTH WELL EXAM

NUTRITION:

Your breast fed infant is often breast feeding only 3-4 times per day and formula fed infants are usually taking 3 or 4 6-8oz bottles per day. This age group usually wants baby food 3 times a day and is ready for finger foods (Cheerios, crackers). If your child has mastered finger foods, it is also okay to begin offering table foods after 9 months of age. Start to transition to 3 meals per day with 2-3 snacks. Make sure the pieces of food are soft and small enough to be swallowed whole. Avoid foods your child may choke on: No popcorn, chips, hot dogs, sausages, carrot sticks, celery, whole grapes, raisins, hard candy, or tough meat. Do not force feed. It may take a child 10-12 exposures before they develop a taste for a certain food. Do not give honey to a child under the age of 1 yr. Newer studies have shown that waiting to introduce certain foods associated with allergies, such as eggs, dairy, soy, peanuts, or fish, does not prevent food allergies. Water and 50% diluted juice with water can be offered via sippy cups at this age (no more than 4 oz of juice per day).

SLEEP:

Due to normal brain development, bedtime resistance and/or night awakenings often recur briefly at this age. It is important to remain consistent in training your infant to fall asleep on their own so that you do not lose ground that has been gained. Most infants at this age still require 2-3 naps during the day. Begin to establish an appropriate and regular bedtime (usually 7:30-8:30). Children at this age should be getting about 12-16 hrs of sleep over a 24 hr period.

BLADDER AND BOWEL FUNCTION:

Babies bowel patterns can change in frequency, color, smell, consistency with introduction of new foods. Ignore color changes (unless blood noted). Stools once every 3-4 days are okay as long as they are not hard pebbles or formed more than peanut butter in consistency.

DEVELOPMENT:

Your infant is now mobile and “busy”! A 9-month old should be able to reach a goal 4-5 feet away either by rolling, crawling, army crawling, or scooting. Your child should start making monosyllable consonant sounds as well as screeching, laughing, and sometimes growling. Your child should be able to sit well on his/her own, bang 2 objects together to make sound, use a pincer grasp, and imitate some movements like “waving bye-bye.” He/she is also beginning to develop their own will and may now crawl away from you or close their mouth to offered food.

- Other than video chatting with family, exposure to “screens” (TV, tablets, smartphones, etc.) is discouraged at this age.
- Reading aloud, interactive storytelling, and singing are all great ways to help build language during infancy.
- Your baby may have started teething; this can lead to irritability, *occasional* low-grade temperature (no more than 101°F), drooling, and a desire to chew on something hard. Teething rings made of firm rubber (not frozen) can be helpful. Avoid using teething tablets containing belladonna and numbing gels containing benzocaine.

SAFETY:

- Always use an approved, rear-facing infant car seat in the back seat.
- **Childproof your home!** All medication, cleaning supplies, poisons, etc. should be locked in upper cabinets. Remove dangling electrical cords and blinds/drapery cords from you infant’s reach. Avoid placing cups of hot liquids near the edges of tables. Beware that your infant may begin getting into cabinets and bottom drawers by 7-9 months of age. All medications, cleaning supplies, poisons, etc. should be locked in upper cabinets. Install gates at the top and bottom of staircases. Upright furniture such as dressers, bookcases, and TVs should be secured to the wall to avoid tipping.
- **Avoid** baby walkers. These allow infants to reach higher and move faster than they are developmentally ready to handle. Most walker injuries occur while adults are watching; they are simply unable to respond quickly enough! Crawling is important part of a baby’s exploration. Using an infant walker can lead to delays in normal motor and mental development.
- **Choking!** This is a huge hazard as everything will go into your infant’s mouth. Buy age-appropriate toys and keep older children’s toys with small parts in rooms where your infant does not go.
- Never leave you child unattended near water (bathtub, swimming pool, toilet, etc.). Even an inch of water in a bucket can be a drowning hazard to a child. Lower hot water heater to 120°F and test bath water, bottle water, etc. on wrist.
- **NEVER** shake a baby. Irreversible brain damage can occur to infants and toddlers whom are shaken.
- Make sure the smoke detectors & carbon monoxide monitors are operational in your home.
- Use sunscreen when outside and avoid overheating your infant by staying outdoors too long. Avoid peak sun hours from 10 a.m. to 3pm if possible. Use insect repellent when necessary, especially if mosquito or tick exposure is possible.
- All parents & caregivers should learn infant CPR. Have the number for poison control available at home (1-800-222-1222).
- Second-hand smoke exposure is very dangerous for your child. Do not smoke around your baby, in your home or car.