

## SIX MONTHS OLD

### **DEVELOPMENT**

Watch your baby sit with some support. He may also roll over completely and pick up and pass objects from hand to hand. Talk to your baby. He will continue to make more and more varied babbling noises and may begin to imitate sounds. This is an important part of language development. Many 6-month old babies will be sleeping through the night. If your baby does wake up in the middle of the night, give him time to get back to sleep on his own. If he does not stop crying within 20 minutes, check on the baby and verbally try to calm him. Try not to get into a waking routine but help him learn to put himself back to sleep. Avoid letting the baby go to sleep with a bottle in its mouth -- this will cause tooth decay. Some children get their first tooth around 6 months of age and most will chew on firm objects and drool a lot.

### **NUTRITION**

If not started already, your child can begin to take solid foods now. Try to introduce cereal, then vegetables, and then fruits - some children may view fruits as a dessert. Adding one solid food at a time at intervals of several days is recommended. Your baby still needs breast milk or formula to ensure a healthy diet. It is not recommended to give your baby eggs, citrus fruits or strawberries until one year of age to help prevent food allergies later. You may want to prepare your own nutritious baby food. Food blenders will help you prepare food for placement in ice cube trays. After the food is frozen place it in a sealable bag in the freezer. Carefully warm the amount you desire to use for each feeding, testing to make sure it is not too hot before giving it to the baby. Commercial baby foods are also convenient.

### **SAFETY**

Please do not change your rear-facing car seat to a forward facing one. Only children who have attained the age of 12 months and weigh at least 20 pounds, may use forward facing car seats. Once a baby is about 20 pounds and can sit well without assistance, and has reached 12 months of age, they can safely ride in a car seat restraint in a forward position in the back seat. ALWAYS use the car seat EVERY time your child travels in a vehicle. Do not secure a pacifier around a baby's neck with a string. Protect electric outlets and cords from baby's exploring fingers. Passive smoke is dangerous to the baby's health now and in the future. Walkers are potentially dangerous as well; and, in fact, may actually delay your child's walking.

### **GENERAL WELL-BEING**

Most of the illnesses your baby may now begin to experience will be caused by a virus, while some may be caused by bacteria. Babies build immunity with each exposure to the different viruses and bacteria. The frequency of these viral illnesses can be frustrating for the child, a parent, and the physician, but generally are not cause for alarm. Antibiotics are used only for bacterial infections. Many bacteria have developed resistance to antibiotics. For this reason we prescribe antibiotics with caution. Stuffy noses can sometimes be helped with a saline solution. This can be purchased or made by mixing 1/8 teaspoon of salt in four [4] ounces of water. Place 2-4 drops in nostril followed by nasal aspiration with a bulb syringe. If your child is running a fever he will probably need to be checked. The appropriate dose of acetaminophen (Tylenol) is 5-7 milligrams per pound every 4 hours as needed for relief.

### **NEXT APPOINTMENT**

Make an appointment for your child's nine-month physical exam. Your baby may be due additional immunizations at that visit.