



Your Child at Six Months

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TODAY'S MEASUREMENTS

Head circumference: _____ centimeters (_____ percentile)

Height: _____ inches (_____ percentile)

Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces (_____ percentile)

IMMUNIZATIONS: DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis)/Hib (haemophilus influenzae)/Polio; Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal conjugate, Rotavirus

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- **Fever**
- **More irritability or fussiness**
- **Redness or swelling at the site of the shot**
- **More spitting up or looser stools**

If needed, you can give your baby acetaminophen (Tylenol). Ask your doctor for the correct dose. Contact your doctor if your child's symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

Next visit: Age nine months

NUTRITION

If you have not done so already, start giving your baby solid foods. Signs that your baby is ready for solids include good head control, interest in watching others eat, opening his or her mouth as food nears and not sticking his or her tongue out as often when you offer a spoon. Talk with your doctor if you have questions or a family history of food allergies. Follow these general guidelines when starting your baby on solids:

- Feed your baby in a bouncy seat or high chair. Start with infant rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula.
- Do not force feed your baby. Allow him or her to decide how much to eat.
- After about one week of cereal, slowly start giving your baby pureed vegetables or fruits. You can also try other infant cereals such as barley or oatmeal. Your baby may need to try a new food 15 times before accepting it.
- Good sources of iron include meats and iron-fortified cereal. One ounce of cereal meets your baby's daily iron needs. It is helpful to feed your baby foods that are rich in vitamin C, such as pureed fruit, with the cereal.
- Slowly increase the number of solid food meals to two to three a day during the next few months.

DEVELOPMENT

All babies develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your baby:

- Blows bubbles
- Starts babbling at others
- Makes more sounds in a row
- Copies sounds
- Starts to recognize his or her name
- Smiles and babbles at his or her own image
- Feels nervous with strangers and seems happy seeing familiar faces
- Rolls over
- Sits with support by leaning forward on hands
- Rocks back and forth on hands and knees to prepare for crawling
- Reaches for, grabs and moves objects from hand to hand
- Tries to pick up objects using a raking movement of the hand



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- Your baby does not need juice. But if your child is constipated you can give juice in small amounts—no more than four ounces a day.
- Let your baby use a sippy cup to drink water and juice. Do not let him or her drink juice from a bottle.
- Your baby's bowel movements will change in color, texture, odor and number after you start solids. Let your doctor know whether your baby has hard, pellet-like stools.
- Do not give your baby cow's milk, honey, eggs, fish, shellfish or nuts until he or she is at least 12 months.
- If your baby drinks less than 32 ounces of formula a day, keep giving him or her vitamin D supplements daily.
- If your tap water does not have fluoride in it or if you just use bottled water that does not have fluoride, you may want to use nursery water or fluoride supplements. Talk with your doctor for details.

SLEEP

It is not too late to start a bedtime routine if you have not yet done so. Letting your baby hold an object while in the crib, such as a small blanket, often helps at this age. Nighttime feeding is still normal, but it usually does not happen more than one or two times a night. If your baby does not fall asleep on his or her own, or wakes more than twice at night to feed, talk with your doctor about how you can help your baby sleep better.

TEETHING

The first teeth to appear are usually the lower central incisors, which can appear at four to 18 months. Chew toys, a cold damp washcloth, teething biscuits or Tylenol may help make your baby more comfortable. To keep teeth and gums healthy, wipe them with a washcloth or soft toothbrush daily. Remember to avoid sugary juices and never allow your baby to drink a bottle in bed.

SAFETY

- Start preparing for your baby to crawl. Move all chemicals, cleaners and medications to high cabinets that your baby can't reach. Put locks on lower cabinets.
- Block off stairs and dangerous rooms with gates.
- Cover electrical outlets and remove dangling or visible electrical cords.
- Do not use walkers that move.
- When outdoors put a hat on your baby and apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30.
- Before your baby begins to stand, lower the crib mattress to the lowest position and remove the bumpers.
- Always place your baby in a car seat that faces backward in the back seat. For more information, go the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site: nhtsa.gov.
- Never leave your baby alone in the car or a bath or on high surfaces due to the risk of falling. Always keep one hand on your baby when he or she is on a high surface.
- Do not cook or drink hot liquids while holding your baby.
- Do not let people smoke around your baby.

- Never tie a pacifier or put jewelry around your baby's neck.
- Make sure that your baby's toys do not have sharp edges and can't be broken. The toys should be at least one and a half inches wide—your baby could choke on them if they are smaller than that. Keep balloons and plastic bags away from your baby—they are dangerous and can suffocate your child.
- Make sure that the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, please speak with your doctor or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)** or ndvh.org.
- Post the Poison Control Hotline on your refrigerator: **1-800-222-1222**.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

- Postpartum depression can happen at any time during the first year. While postpartum blues are common during the first few weeks, they usually get better. If moms feel sad, anxious or depressed beyond this time, they should seek help and talk with their doctor. You can find more information online at postpartum.net.
- Consider joining or forming a regular play group. It is good for you and your baby to be with other people.
- Try to find time for you and your partner to be alone. Taking care of yourselves will allow you to take better care of your family.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

- Now your baby can interact with you more. Keep your baby in a high chair or upright seat while awake. This allows your baby to look around and "talk" with you and his or her brothers and sisters.
- Keep reading to your baby daily.
- Copy the noises your baby makes and let him or her respond.
- Start playing games such as peekaboo and patty-cake.
- Do not let your baby watch TV or baby videos.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org; American Academy of Family Physicians: aafp.org; Immunization information: immunize.org, cdc.gov/vaccines, vaccine.chop.edu, familydoctor.org and vaccineinformation.org
- Suggested reading:
 - *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age Five* by American Academy of Pediatrics, Stephen Shelov, M.D.
 - *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense* by Elyn Satter
 - *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Marc Weissbluth
 - *Baby Proofing Basics* by Vicki Lansky
 - *Mother Nurture* by Rick Hanson, Jan Hanson and Ricki Pollycove
- Other books are available at aap.org/bookstore.