

Pediatric Development - 6 Months

Date: _____

_____’s growth record

Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Length: _____ inches

Head Circumference: _____ inches

DEVELOPMENT

At this age your baby can generally “tripod” or sit leaning forward on palms for support. Sitting is accomplished at 5 to 7 months of age. Babies at this age have a raking grasp. They can see well enough to reach for objects, transfer them between hands and put their feet in their mouths while on their backs. Babies now cry less, turn toward voices and are more social. They recognize strangers and are more likely to experience separation anxiety.

STIMULATION

Infants need verbal and visual stimuli and learn by imitating. It helps to talk often to your child, sing to him or her and even read to your baby. Babies may be able to play games such as peek-a-boo and patty-cake by 8 to 9 months. Babies have short attention spans, but they can increasingly concentrate on an activity as they get older. Have enough toys to occupy your baby and stimulate him or her. This can help when you need to change a diaper or dress the child. Good toys at this age include musical toys, floating bath toys, lids and stuffed toys. Wash toys periodically to avoid germ collection.

DISCIPLINE

- Set limits and consistently enforce them, praising when possible
- Have siblings appropriately involved in care and stimulation of the baby to avoid their feelings of being ignored
- Allow your baby to sleep in a crib and fall asleep alone so he or she becomes used to it. Giving a favorite toy or blanket to hold in bed may help.

NUTRITION

Breast milk or formula remains the most important part of your baby’s diet, particularly for bone and brain growth. If your baby has not yet started on solid foods, now is a good time to introduce them. Let your baby decide how much of each food he or she wants. Include foods your baby can eat at 6 months, such as cereals, vegetables, fruits and fruit juices. You may start meats at 7 to 8 months of age.

Introduce one food at a time and do not begin a new food for three to five days to make it easier to determine the cause of any allergic reactions. Allergic reactions usually consist of a rash, diarrhea, vomiting and even breathing problems.

Do not force your child to eat something. Just try it again in two to three weeks and he or she may like or tolerate it better. Do not give a baby citrus juice, egg whites or peanut butter at 6 months. Avoid adding salt or sugar to foods. Proper feeding technique helps to prevent gas and spitting up or vomiting. Babies are less likely to have these problems, as they grow older. Do not leave the baby in a bed with a bottle.

STOOLS

Stools become thicker and browner as the baby grows older. Constipation, which by definition means hard stools, is not uncommon. If you think your child is constipated, please discuss this with your doctor. Do not manually remove stools from your infant.

SLEEP

Babies will generally sleep at least 10 to 12 hours a night and nap one or more times a day. Some of those naps may range from twenty minutes to four hours.

TEETHING

Teeth usually erupt between 6 and 10 months, but may appear earlier or later. Symptoms associated with teething include drooling and biting on everything. Irritability or a low-grade fever can occur up to one to two months before the teeth actually appear. Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit is not usually associated with teething. In such cases, you may wish to discuss other causes for the fever with your doctor. Measures to relieve teething pain include using cold teething rings, teething gels or Tylenol (acetaminophen). Brush teeth with a soft brush for dental care at this age. You do not need to use toothpaste.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Your child may be receiving immunizations at the 6-month visit. Discuss with your physician which immunizations your child should receive and the potential side effects. To help with the possibility of some of the side effects, Tylenol® (acetaminophen) may be given every four to six hours over the next 24 to 48 hours. If you have any questions about your child's reaction to the vaccine, please talk with your health care provider.

SAFETY

- Your infant becomes more mobile at this age and more prone to injury. Infants are very curious, a good thing, but they display very little judgment. Supervise a child of this age at all times
- Water, such as that in the tub or even in a bucket, poses a special risk for youngsters unattended
- Close doors, gate stairways and lock cupboards and cabinets
- Place electrical outlet covers on all outlets
- Keep drugs, chemicals, cleaning agents, detergents, bleach and insecticides out of reach of infants
- Clearly label containers to avoid confusion about the content
- Keep the poison control center number 314-772-5200 or 1-800-366-8888 near your phone.

CHOKING HAZARDS

- Keep aware of your child's surroundings. Choking hazards include toys with small or removable pieces, marbles, coins and balloons. Foods that you can consider choking hazards include nuts, grapes, raisins, hot dogs, carrots and popcorn
- Strangulation hazards include dangling drapery or blind cords, strings and electrical cords
- Consider learning Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), so that you can help a choking or unresponsive child.

ILLNESS

- Call your doctor if your child develops a high fever, extreme irritability, lethargy, breathing difficulties or for any other health concerns regarding your child
- Infants get frequent colds, and these can often be treated without visiting your doctor. Call your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.