

Keep your baby healthy

Checkups are important even if your baby is healthy. The doctor or nurse will check your baby's growth and development and answer any questions you have. Bring his or her Lifetime Immunization Record card and Childhood Health Record booklet with you to every checkup. If your baby has missed any vaccine doses, catch up now. Being fully immunized helps prevent serious diseases, such as whooping cough, meningitis, and flu. Vaccines can prevent diseases that may lead to pneumonia, blood infections, brain damage, and death in children. Be sure you, your baby's siblings, and your baby's other caregivers are also up-to-date on immunizations. This helps protect him or her even more.

Keep your baby's first teeth healthy

Your baby's first teeth are very important for eating and speaking well. They hold space for permanent teeth, which helps prevent teeth from growing in crooked.

- Clean your baby's teeth and gums every night before bed. Use a moist cloth or a small, soft toothbrush to wipe teeth.
- Lift your baby's lip once a month to look carefully at his or her teeth. If you notice white or brown spots, or bleeding gums, visit the dentist or doctor.
- Formula or milk that stays in your baby's mouth while sleeping can cause cavities. If your baby falls asleep while breastfeeding, remove your nipple from his or her mouth. If you give a bottle in bed, it should only be water.
- Avoid sharing your toothbrush, eating utensils, and cups with your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay may easily spread from your mouth to his or hers.

Babies do not need juice

Juice is not recommended for babies under one year old. Juice can make babies less hungry for healthy foods. It

can also be bad for the new teeth that are forming. Juice does not take the place of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Eat together as a family

Your baby learns about eating by watching you eat. Talk with your baby about the new foods he or she is tasting, smelling, and touching. Small pieces of food that are easy to pick up and soft enough to squish are fun to touch and taste. Offer small pieces of whole grain dry cereal, soft fruit, and cooked pasta, vegetables, and meat.

Even if your baby has some teeth, he or she is not old enough to eat hard foods. Babies this age can choke on foods, such as grapes or slices of hot dog. Cut food into bite-sized pieces. Stay near your baby and watch while he or she is eating.

If you are breastfeeding, keep at it! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children breastfeed for **at least** the first year of life, and for as long as mom and baby choose to continue.

Switch from a bottle to a cup

By age one, your baby should be drinking from a cup at meals and snack times. Keep the following in mind when choosing a cup:

- Choose a cup **without** a "no-spill valve." The only way your baby can get liquid out of many no-spill cups is to suck. This prevents him or her from learning to sip.
- A snap-on or screw-on lid can reduce spills and still allows your baby to sip.
- A cup with two handles makes it easier for your baby to hold the cup.
- A cup with a weighted base prevents the cup from tipping over.
- Offer only water unless it is mealtime.



Keeping Your Baby Healthy and Safe

Your baby's relationships are important

Your baby's brain is developing constantly so every moment is important. Your baby's relationships with you and other caregivers are very important for health and development. The everyday things that you and your baby's caregivers do help your baby learn and his or her brain develop.



- Talk to your baby about what will happen next as you do things with him or her, such as changing diapers, feeding, and bathing.
- Cuddle with your baby while you talk about pictures in his or her books.
- Play copycat games. Make a funny sound and then wait for your baby to make it. Copy his or her sounds, too.

Your baby may start to be most comfortable around people he or she spends the most time with and be more anxious around strangers. Remind everyone who takes care of your baby how important they are to him or her.

Your baby's development

It's important to find out if your baby is on track for healthy development or if he or she may need some support. Each baby develops at their own pace, but if at nine months your baby is not sitting up or making babbling sounds, or if you have any other development questions, help is available. Talk with your doctor or nurse or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to learn more. They can help you check your baby's development and connect you with the Early Support for Infant and Toddlers Program in your community, if needed.

Antibiotic use

When your baby gets sick, it is common to want to give medicine to help him or her feel better. However, do not expect your doctor to always give your baby antibiotics. Antibiotics do not kill viruses, which are often the cause of colds.

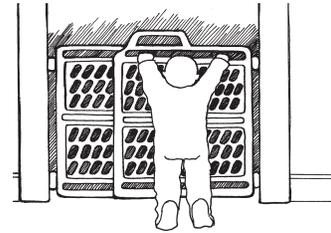
Stay with your baby in the bath

A baby can drown quickly and quietly in only a few inches of water! Stay with your baby the entire time he or she is in the tub. **Do not leave the room**, for even a second, to answer the door or phone. Even if your baby sits up well or uses a bath seat, do not leave him or her alone or with an older child.

Prevent young climbers from falling

A fall can cause cuts, broken teeth and bones, or a head injury. Here are some ways to help prevent falls:

- Move chairs that might tip over so that your baby can't climb on them.
- Move furniture away from windows. Do not put your baby's crib near a window.
- Remember that window screens will NOT stop your baby from falling out a window. Install window stops or guards that can be removed by an adult in an emergency.
- Check the side rails of your baby's crib. If they are not high enough, lower the mattress.
- Keep gates closed at the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure the gate will stay in place when you push on it.



Following these suggestions can help keep your baby safe, but the best way to keep him or her safe is to stay close.

Keep your baby's car seat rear-facing

Your baby should ride in a rear-facing car seat until two years of age or until he or she is heavy enough or tall enough based on the manufacturer's instructions. A rear-facing seat gives your baby the best protection because it cradles his or her body better than a forward-facing seat. This helps spread the force caused by a crash more evenly across your baby's entire body and reduces the risk of a neck injury.

Search "car seats" at www.healthychildren.org for more information.

Dangers of air bags to babies and children

Air bags can seriously injure or kill a baby or child in the front seat, even in a minor crash. Some vehicles, such as pick-up trucks and sports cars, have air bags but no backseat. These vehicles often have an air bag on/off switch. Unfortunately, even if the air bag is turned off, the air bag may still open in a crash. **Always** check with your vehicle manufacturer before putting a car seat on the front seat of any vehicle. Washington law requires all children to ride in the back seat until age thirteen, when possible.

Questions about airbags?
Visit www.safercar.gov for more information.