

Well-Baby Visits: 9 Months

Welcome to the 9-month visit! Your baby may get shots today if they're behind on vaccines or if they're getting a flu shot.

Today your baby's doctor or health care provider will check to see how well they're developing. Your baby is learning and doing so much now. Their language skills are growing, they can move around on their own, and they're eating more regular foods! If you have concerns, tell your child's doctor or health care provider.

Growth and Development

Read to your baby as much as you can. Point to pictures and speak slowly. This is an important age for their language development.

At 9 months old, your baby should be able to:

- Pull themselves up to stand.
- Bear weight on their legs when held up by their arms (Picture 1).
- Make sounds like they are talking.
- Stretch out their arms to reach an object.
- Sit up on their own for at least 60 seconds.
- Feed themselves small foods like a cookie or cracker.
- Hold 2 objects – 1 in each hand.
- Help hold their bottle during feedings.



Image source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (NIDDK), National Institute of Health

Picture 1 You can help your baby stand by holding their arms.

Nutrition

At this age, offer your baby a variety of table foods that are soft and easy to chew. You may need to offer them a food more than 10 times before they like it. Do not bribe your baby with food. Do not use food as a reward.

- Fruits and vegetables should be given at every meal. Use them as snacks too.
- **Never** leave your baby alone while they're eating.
- Do not give them foods like popcorn, candy, nuts, or grapes. They are choking risks.
- Keep giving your baby breast milk or formula until they're 1 year old. Do not add cereal to bottles before feeding.
- Do not give your baby water, juice, or honey.
- Your baby shouldn't be waking up in the middle of the night for a bottle or snack. If they are, wean them from this behavior. While weaning, they will cry a lot. This is normal. The crying will get better over time. Do not give in to your baby.

Safety

- Do not leave your baby alone on a changing table or in a bathtub, car, bed, or sofa.
- They must ride in a properly fitted rear-facing car seat in the back seat until they're at least 2-years-old or until they reach the weight and height limit of their rear-facing seat.
- Do not smoke around your baby. Do not let anyone smoke around them.
- Your home needs to be fully safety-proofed. Ask your baby's doctor or health care provider about what you need to do. Start by:

- Getting down to your baby's eye level to check for hazards.
- Placing safety covers on electric outlets.
- Putting baby gates at the top and bottom of any stairs (Picture 2).
- Not leaving objects close to counter edges. Your baby could pull things down.
- Putting away medicines, cleaning supplies, anything poisonous, or small objects like:
 - Batteries
 - Jewelry
 - Ear buds
 - Coins



Picture 2 Keep stairs blocked off.