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## YOUR BABY AT 9 MONTHS

### I. FEEDING/SLEEPING

- A. At this time you can be giving chopped table food or junior foods. Cheerios make a good finger food at this age. Avoid eggs, honey, peanut butter and chokable foods. However, foods cooked with small amounts of eggs are acceptable.
- B. Continue formula or breast milk even though the amount consumed may be substantially reduced. Continue working on a cup. Dairy products can be introduced, but cow milk in a bottle or cup is not recommended before 1 year of age.
- C. Begin thinking about discontinuing the bottle by 12 months. It is perfectly fine to put formula in a cup: in fact, it will make the transition to milk at one year much easier. Juice has lots of sugar and little nutrition: water is better.
- D. If your child has been using a pacifier, now is an ideal time to wean him/her off of it.
- E. **Sleep:** Infants at this age may have difficulty "turning off" to fall asleep and may wake for periods at night due to separation anxiety. Try not to encourage this. Try reading to your baby and put her into the crib while still awake in order to encourage independent sleeping.
- F. Babies at this age are often still napping at least twice a day.

### II. GROWTH/DEVELOPMENT

- A. 9 month olds can pick up smaller objects and will make their first attempts to feed themselves.
- B. Babies like to have a place to explore and play. They know the meaning of "mama" and "dada" and begin to show their personality. They like looking in a mirror. They will respond to their own name.
- C. In the next few months your baby will begin to pull up on things and "cruise" (walk while holding on to objects with both hands), and creep, crawl, or scoot. They should have several hours a day out of playpen, crib, highchair, and stationary saucers. They should have freedom to move about in all directions and to explore the larger world around them – always under constant surveillance.
- D. Infants at this age often experience stranger anxiety which can be very distressing to parents, friends and relatives, but it is a normal developmental milestone.
- E. Stimulation: Use single names for things. Name and point to body parts. Play pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo. Provide "noisy" toys (squeaky toys, banging items, plastic "squish" types). Allow your baby to feed himself and use a cup. She may like to put things in and out of boxes.

### III. SAFETY

- A. Continue to childproof your home, or wherever your baby will be spending his time. It's especially important to lock up poisons, medicines and sharp objects (which may be placed in ears, nose, etc.) and keep them out of reach. Have gates up even where there are just a few stairs, put childproof latches on cabinets where medicines and cleaning solutions are stored, put plastic caps on all outlets and keep power cords out of reach. By crawling around your house yourself, you may find hidden hazards before your child does. Make sure all "tippy" items are firmly secured to the wall with the appropriate safety brackets.
- B. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors every spring and fall when we change the clocks.
- C. Keep careful watch when your baby is near water, including pools, tubs, spas, toilets and even buckets of water (you use to wash the floor). Babies can get into water easily, but can't get out!
- D. Your baby should remain in a rear facing car seat until at least over 1 year old **AND** 20 lbs. It is safer to remain rear facing until 2 years old.
- E. Avoid walkers with wheels, however stationary Exersaucers are safe for your child.
- F. Brush your baby's teeth daily with a soft toothbrush or washcloth (no toothpaste is necessary). Don't let your baby have a bottle in bed; it's the number one cause of tooth decay.
- G. Smoking is strongly discouraged: passive smoke contributes to lung disease and frequent ear infections in your child.
- H. Sunscreen should be applied whenever your child is out in the sun, an SPF of 30 is sufficient.

### IV. WHAT HAPPENS AT THIS VISIT

- A. Your baby will have a physical and developmental assessment. Any necessary vaccines will be given. If needed, the infant Tylenol dose is \_\_\_\_\_ml.
- B. Your child's next visit is at 12 months. This visit **CANNOT** be scheduled to occur before your baby's first birthday due to the immunizations which will be given at that time.