

Hi. I am your baby.

I am now 9 to 12 months old. I have my own unique personality and my own way of doing things. I may do some things before other babies and I may do some things after them. Be patient. I will get there in my own time.

The most important thing you can do is to be warm, loving and responsive to me. This will help my brain develop and shape the way I learn, think and behave for the rest of my life. I also need you to take care of yourself. If you feel unhappy or have negative feelings, please talk to family, friends or your doctor.

To help you know what to expect, here are some common milestones most babies reach between 9 and 12 months old.

Growth

Size

- I am growing more slowly now than I did during the first nine months of my life.
- My head and body are in better proportion to each other.

Teeth

- I have probably started teething and will continue to get new teeth until I am 2 to 3 years old.
- I might be fussy and cranky when I am teething and I'll probably drool a lot of saliva. I might not be very hungry.
- You can help me by letting me chew on a clean, cool, damp washcloth or teething ring. Don't use teething gel, ice cubes, teething biscuits or soft foods to help me teethe. I could choke on these things.
- Talk to my dentist or doctor if my gums become red and sore or if I get a fever or diarrhea when I am teething.
- You can clean my teeth with a child's soft toothbrush or by wiping them with a clean washcloth or gauze every day.

Development

Movement

- I can grab and hold things between my thumb and finger.
- I might clap my hands.
- I can get into a sitting position and can sit for 5 to 10 minutes without support.
- I can move around by creeping, crawling or pushing myself backwards on my stomach or bum.
- I might stand alone for short periods without support.
- I can walk while holding on to furniture.
- I might start walking.

Language

- I might say simple words like "mama," "dada" and "bye-bye."
- I like to imitate sounds you make while you dress, feed or play with me.
- When you talk to me, stop and give me time to answer.
- I might shake my head to answer "yes" or "no" to questions you ask me.
- I like it when you talk to me in 2 or 3 word sentences, such as: "You're happy," "Throw ball," or "Mommy's cooking." But please, no "baby talk."
- I like to babble loudly, tunefully and constantly, sometimes just to get your attention.
- I like you to watch what I am doing and to join in my play.
- If I do not babble or say simple words, take me to a speech-pathologist.

Vision and Hearing

- I can see objects close and far away and can follow them with my eyes.
- I like to look at and talk to myself in the mirror.
- I might "dance" by moving my hands and body to music.
- I like to hear new words when we look at picture books together.
- I might get ear infections. If I seem to be having trouble hearing, take me to a doctor as soon as possible.

Sexual Health

Children learn about sexuality daily and continue learning throughout their lives. Sexuality is an awareness of our entire self as a male or female. This is basic to healthy sexual development.

- I learn about love and trust by the way you hold and cuddle me.
- I need to hear the correct name of all my body parts, i.e., eyes, nose, penis, vulva or vagina.
- I might start to discover and explore my body including my sexual parts. This is a normal stage of my sexual development.

Behavior and Emotions

Thinking, Feeling and Doing

- I can tell when you are feeling happy, sad or angry.
- I like to drop things just to see you pick them up.
- I might cooperate more when you dress me.
- I might be afraid of the dark.
- I can wave bye-bye.
- I want to touch everything while I explore my world.
- I put a lot of things in my mouth to learn more about them.
- My attention span is getting longer.
- I might become attached to a special toy, blanket or other object.
- **Never** shake me for any reason. Shaking can cause brain damage, blindness, paralysis or even death. Take a break, don't shake.

Sleeping

- I am developing a more regular sleeping pattern and am probably sleeping through the night.
- I like to nap for 1 to 2 hours in the afternoon. I might not need a morning nap.

Playing

- I like to look at picture books.

- You can help me learn to stand by gently pulling me up from a sitting position.
- I can practice walking with your help. Hold me under the arms from behind while I practice stepping.
- I might like toys that stack, push, open, squeak and move; large dolls and puppets; push-pull toys and toy telephones.
- I might also like things from around the house, like empty boxes, old magazines, paper tubes and empty plastic bottles.

Eating

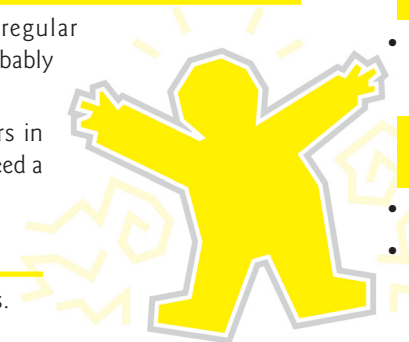
- I still need breast milk, iron-fortified formula, or whole milk, but I don't need as much now that I am eating other foods. Ask our community health nurse how much milk I need to drink.
- If I am breastfed, ask our community health nurse or doctor about vitamin D supplements.
- Try giving me a variety of different foods and increase the texture of my foods. I can try table foods. Our community health nurse can suggest foods that I can eat.
- I can hold and drink from a cup.
- Let me try feeding myself by giving me finger foods or letting me practice using a spoon.
- Because I am growing more slowly, I will probably eat less as I get closer to my first birthday.
- I will let you know when I am full. Please don't over feed me.
- I learn eating skills by watching others. Feed me when you and the rest of my family eat your regular meals.
- Avoid adding extra salt or fats, such as butter, margarine or oil to my food.

Child Care

- If I need child care, talk to a community health nurse who can tell you what to look for in a child care setting.

Immunization

- I should have had 3 appointments for immunizations by now.
- I will be due for my next immunizations at 12 months of age.



Keeping Me Safe

I am on the move! I might even be walking. I am getting more active and more interested in exploring the world around me. What was safe one day may not be safe the next day. I need you to make sure I am safe and protected, both inside and outside my home.

Most childhood injuries can be predicted and prevented. Here are some **simple guidelines** to help keep me safe between 9 and 12 months old...and beyond.

Falls are the leading cause of hospital visits for childhood injuries

- Remember I am getting more mobile now so I can reach higher and get into places faster.
- Stay with me when I play outside even in our backyard.
- Put baby gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Check furniture for sharp corners. If possible, move this furniture out of the way or use corner and edge protectors.
- Always strap me in with the safety straps when you put me in a high chair. Stay with me when I am in a high chair.
- Use a high chair that has a wide base so it cannot be tipped over if someone bumps into it.
- Strap me securely into my stroller or carriage.

Car Safety

- One of the most important things you can do to keep me safe is to put me in an approved child safety seat **every time** we travel by car.
- When installing my child safety seat, always read your instruction manual for the seat and the owner manual for your vehicle.
- If we are using a used child safety seat, it is best to have it inspected. Discuss this with our community health nurse.
- I might fight to get out of my child safety seat but don't let me win. My seat is the safest place for me if we stop suddenly or are in a collision.
- I am safest in a rear facing child safety seat until my first birthday. Be sure to read the manufacturer's directions – some are only recommended rear facing until I weigh 9 kg (20 pounds) but others not until 16 kg (35 pounds).

- Don't forget to use the tether on the back of my seat when it faces forward.
- Talk to our community health nurse if you have any questions about installing and using my child safety seat.
- I should not eat or drink by myself while travelling in a vehicle. I could choke while you are driving and you may not be able to help me.
- Never leave me alone in a vehicle. What you think will take 5 minutes may take much longer. I can become too hot in a vehicle in the summer and too cold during the winter.

House and Yard Safety

- Turn all pot handles and spouts to the back of the stove.
- Lock up or put out of reach all poisons, medicines, household cleaners and alcoholic beverages.
- Know first aid for poisoning and keep the phone number for the Poison Control Centre close to the phone. The phone number in Alberta is 1-800-332-1414
- Keep knives, forks, scissors and other sharp utensils in a latched drawer.
- Keep cords for things like kettles and irons out of reach.
- Make sure there is a safety cover in every wall outlet and a lightbulb in every lamp socket.
- Keep cords from venetian blinds well out of reach. I can strangle myself with a blind cord.
- Unplug electrical appliances that aren't being used, especially in the bathroom.
- Lock up garbage containers or use containers that have child-resistant lids.
- Check if any of the plants and berries in our yard are poisonous. Put a secure fence around any poisonous plants or simply take them out of the house or yard.
- Don't cut the lawn with a power mower when I am around and never let me ride on a riding mower.
- If we have an automatic garage door, always make sure I am with you and well away from the door before closing it.

Sun Safety

- Keep me out of the direct sun. You can use sunscreen for babies older than 6 months but light clothing, hats and shade is still the best protection.

Water Safety

- Never leave me alone in or near a bathtub or swimming pool – even a baby swimming pool. I can drown in just a few inches of water.
- Check that bath water is not too hot and use a non-skid mat in the bathtub.
- If you haven't already, set our hot water heater to below 50 °C.

Choking

- Do not give me hard, small and round, smooth or sticky solid foods like hard candies, cough drops, gum, raisins, nuts or grapes. They may block my airway and I could choke.
- If you put me in a playpen, check the top rails for tears or holes. I might bite off chunks of vinyl or plastic and choke.
- Choose toys and equipment appropriate for my age.

Animals and Children

- Animals, even the family pet, can hurt me. Stay with me when animals are around.
- My siblings and other children can hurt me. Stay with me when other children are around.

Fire Safety

- Make sure our house has smoke detectors that work.
- Plan and practice how our family will get out of the house if there is a fire.

Questions?

If you have any questions concerning your child's healthy growth and development, please contact your community health nurse at your local health region office.

Health Link Alberta

Edmonton, call 408-LINK (5465)
Calgary, call 943-LINK (5465)
Outside Edmonton and Calgary local calling areas, call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)



9 to 12 months

Growth and Development Series

