

Norman Pediatric Associates  
Parent Handout 6 Month Visit

**Profile:** The 6 – 9 month-old is learning rapidly to understand people’s expression and gestures. The baby is exploring his/her world through grasping and placing things in his/her mouth. He/she can rake small objects. The baby can roll over and will begin to sit alone and will be trying to crawl. Place your baby so he/she is sitting up and can look around. Babies will now follow objects and people with their eyes. Talk with your baby by copying the sounds your baby makes. The baby is beginning to become verbal and respond to different emotions. Stranger anxiety may begin to show up starting at six months of age. The baby should be included in family activities and outings. Play games such as peek-a-boo, patty-cake, and so big. Offer your baby active play with mirrors and colorful toys to hold. Talk and sing to your baby. Make the hour before bedtime loving and calm.

**Feeding/Nutrition:** Feed only breast milk or iron-fortified formula. No cow’s milk until your baby is one year of age. This is a great time to continue to work on the cup with water. Do not give your baby juice. Remember that laying the baby down with a bottle even with milk is bad for the teeth and can lead to ear infections. Also, remember to not prop the bottle. If you have not already started, begin an introduction of iron-fortified cereal and then vegetables followed by plain fruits. Continue to offer one new food every 2 – 3 days. If your baby were to develop an allergy to a particular food, it would be easy to determine what the allergy was based on using this schedule.

If you are already giving 3 meals of cereal and stage 1 vegetables and fruits you can move to stage 2 foods. Avoid stage 2 foods that are labeled as desserts since extra sugar has been added. Also, mashed foods can be given at this stage. At 8 - 9 months finger foods like Zwieback crackers, wet Cheerios and cooked carrots may be introduced. Avoid honey until after your baby is 12 months old since it is the leading cause of botulism poisoning in infants. Have regular times for your baby to eat. Do not let the baby eat all day. Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby’s signs of fullness such as leaning back and turning away. Do not force your baby to eat or finish foods. It may take 10-15 times of giving your baby a food to try before he/she will like it. Continue to give 400 IU of Vitamin D drops or Poly-vi-sol drops (0.5 ml once daily) to your infant.

**Sleep/Bedtime:** Put your baby to bed when he/she is sleepy but still awake. Do not pick up the baby if he/she wakes at night. The baby should be sleeping all night in his/her own room. Do not feed the baby at night.

**Toys and Activities:** Some good toys for this age are “touchy, feely” books. Simple cardboard or cloth books with bright pictures may be able to hold his/her attention especially if someone looks at the books with them. Stacking rings, mirrors, balls, pull toys, activity panels, bells, rattles, and musical toys are also good. Be sure to examine and avoid toys that are small enough to fit into their mouths and pose a choking hazard.

**Safety:** Learn CPR

Child Proof: Your child is becoming more mobile. Now is the time to look around the room for objects of interest to the infant and place them out of reach. Place harmful, sharp, and breakable things up and out of your baby’s reach. Cover electrical outlets and place electrical and telephone cords out of reach. Do not leave hot irons or hair care products plugged in. Put gates at the bottom and top of stairs. Close doors to rooms where your baby could be hurt, like the bathroom. Tie-up all blind and curtain cords. Turn pot handles inward on the stove. Put locks on cabinets that may contain objects or liquids that may be poisonous or harmful to your child. Lower his/her crib mattress. Post a list of emergency phone numbers by your phone or enter them into your cell phone. Be sure to include the Poison Control number.

Smoking/Burns: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING - Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for infants’ health. Make your home and car “no smoking zones”.

Do not smoke or hold hot liquids when holding the baby. Continue efforts for a smoke free environment for your baby. Keep the water heater temperature at 120 degrees F (low setting).

Crib: Lower the crib mattress all the way when your baby begins to stand. Use a crib with slats close together- 2 3/8 inches apart or less. Do not use a crib with drop-side rails. Continue to not use blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, quilts/comforters, or bumper pads in the crib. Use a mesh playpen with weaves less than ¼ inches apart.

Car: Continue use of a rear facing car seat until he/she is 2 years of age or until he/she reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. Your infant may outgrow his/her car seat between now and the next visit, check instructions to see if it is time for a larger seat. Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger air bag.

Never leave your child unattended in a swing or high chair. Never leave your infant unattended with another child, around water (especially in a bathtub) or high places such as changing tables, beds or sofas. Always be close enough to touch your baby. Empty buckets or small pools immediately after use. Walkers are not recommended. While in the kitchen, keep your baby in a high chair or playpen.

**Teeth/Oral Health:** As the infant begins to get teeth, clean them every day, twice a day. On a soft toothbrush, use a rice-grain size smear of fluoride toothpaste. Ask us about the need for fluoride drops. More than half of babies will have at least one tooth by nine months of age, but a few normal babies do not get their first tooth until after their first birthday. When teeth do erupt, the gums may appear red and swollen, the baby may get more fussy than usual, and he/she may start thumb or finger sucking. Healthy gums should cut teeth without pain; the best thing you can do to keep the baby's gum healthy is to massage his/her gums regularly with a wet wash cloth, much like you brush your own teeth. If teething does seem to cause discomfort, give your baby something cold to chew on (keep a couple of fluid filled teething rings in the refrigerator).

**Parent and Family:** Take time for yourself and to be with your partner. Keep in touch with your friends and family. Invite friends over or join a parent group. If you feel alone, we can help with resources. Use only mature, trustworthy babysitters. If you feel unsafe in your home or have been hurt by someone, let us know; we can help.

**Discipline:** Your baby is still too young to understand right from wrong. However, with repetition and consistency your baby can learn "Not for baby". Your baby needs to explore and learn about the world with minimal restrictions. When he/she needs some correction, try to redirect his/her misbehavior by distraction to another safe activity. Also, make it easier for yourself and your baby by child-proofing. If your baby is fussy, give him/her safe toys to hold and put in his/her mouth and make sure he/she is getting regular naps and playtimes.

**Fears:** Stranger anxiety begins to show up at this age, especially if approached and picked up too quickly. Separation from parents may produce anxiety and screaming. This may increase as the baby becomes older and is normal in his/her development. This is a good time to introduce an object or toy that the infant may have in the absence of parents to help provide comfort.

**Immunizations:** Today your child received the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hepatitis B vaccine (HBV), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pneumococcal vaccine (Prevnar), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pentacel which is a combination vaccine that contains DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, & Pertussis), Hib (Haemophilus Influenza), and IPV (Inactivated Poliovirus) vaccines.

**Oklahoma Poison Control:**  
**(405) 271-5454 (OKC area)**  
**1-800-222-1222 (state wide toll free)**  
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