



## 6-month check up

### FEEDINGS:

Breast milk is the best food for baby. Breastfed babies require iron added to his/her diet at this age, because your baby has used his/her iron stores from birth. Breast milk does not have enough iron for growth. If your baby is not breast-feeding then he/she should be on an iron fortified infant formula to prevent anemia. Most babies between 6 and 8 months will begin to show an interest in other foods. It's okay to introduce other foods to baby's diet. Keep breast milk and/or formula as the main diet. The other foods should make up less than 1/4 of the diet. Good foods to start with are mashed bananas, applesauce, iron fortified rice cereal, and yellow vegetables such as squash and sweet potatoes. DO NOT start regular milk until 12 months. Hard cheese and refined foods should not be added to baby's diet. DO NOT add salt or sugar to baby's foods. If your baby does not seem interested in foods, this is fine. Wait until he/she is ready and willing to eat foods. There is no real need for your baby to be on solid foods yet. For exclusively breast fed babies, give them a daily liquid multivitamin to provide them with the daily vitamin D needed.

Once your baby is ready for more than cereal, start by offering a few tablespoons of vegetables or fruit in the same meal as a cereal feeding. All foods should be strained or mushy. Start with yellow vegetables like squash, carrots and sweet potatoes. Move onto green vegetables after that. Introduce only one new fruit or vegetable at a time and preferably only one per week. That gives you a heads-up if your child has an allergic reaction to a fruit or vegetable. If you baby turns away from a particular food, don't push, simply try again in a week or so.

A special baby cup or a "sippy cup" to drink from is a good idea at this age. Soon your baby will prefer to drink from a cup instead of the bottle. Remember to dilute any fruit juice with 1/2 water and 1/2 juice, unless it is made for infants. Your baby may enjoy sitting in a high chair at the family meals at this age.

Do not let your baby have the bottle in bed when going to sleep. Not letting the baby have a bottle at bedtime will prevent tooth decay later. If you child wants a beverage at bedtime, consider giving a small amount of water at this time.

### BABY'S DEVELOPMENT:

Your baby will learn how to do many new tasks! He/she will like to roll over, and may roll over and over to reach a toy. Most babies like to be on their stomach most of the time and will soon learn to sit up. At this age babies grasp objects, but may not let go easily. Your baby will begin to use different sounds and try to talk to you. Babies like their reflection in the mirror and pictures of babies. Sometimes your baby will follow you when you walk away or cry if he/she cannot see you. You can put a clean blanket down on the floor with a few toys to play with. Most babies love their bath. Buy some new bath toys, let your baby splash and have fun. Remember, you cannot turn your back on a baby in the tub, not even for a second!

### TEETHING:

The age your child's first tooth shows can be different from other children. A baby may start teething as early as 4 months and as late as 1 to 1,1/2 years. Babies can become irritable and restless and have loose stools when they are teething. You may see swelling of the gums, and they may want to chew on everything. A teething ring might help. Some children like the kind that has water inside that can be frozen. Cold can soothe the discomfort. Clean and wet

washcloths may be used for chewing on. Liquid Tempera or Tylenol may be used for pain. DO NOT USE ORAGEL OR NUMZIT.

To keep your child's teeth beautiful and healthy, NEVER lay your child down to sleep with the bottle propped. You should wipe baby's teeth with a damp cloth and a small dab of toothpaste until he or she is 18 months old. After that age, the child should brush her/his teeth with your help. Avoid sweets between meals, because sugar feeds the bacteria that causes tooth decay. Thumb sucking and pacifiers should be discouraged early.

### SAFETY:

Babies are now able to move around by themselves and will get into everything. You need to be aware of these problems and protect your child. Children are fast learners and can do new skills quickly. You always need to know where your child is. Protect your child from injury by using gates on stairways and doors. Remove sharp edged and hard furniture from the room he is in. To protect your child, set the temperature on your hot water tank to between 120 and 130 degrees.

Your child will start to grab at anything. NEVER leave cups of hot coffee or hot liquids on tables or counter edges, or drink them while holding your baby. If you baby does get burned, run the burned area under cold water and call the doctor.

At this age your child loves water. Never leave a baby alone near water, the bathtub or toilet, a pail of water, a wading or swimming pool, not for one second! Your baby could drown in shallow water, as small as a dog's water dish.

Poisoning and choking can happen at anytime. Everything a child picks up can go into their mouth. Never leave small objects around or feed them small pieces of food they can choke on. Be prepared and learn how to save a choking child. Protect your child from poisons and medications by locking them up and out of the reach of your child. If he does put something poisonous into his mouth, call your physician or the Arizona Poison Control Center (1-800-362-0101 or 626-6016) immediately.

ALWAYS PLACE YOUR CHILD IN THE CAR SEAT WHILE DRIVING. Make sure you have the correct car seat for the child's age and follow the instructions on how to use the car seat. Set an example for your child and always buckle up! Remember that in the summer in Arizona the car seat can get hot. Cover up the car seat when not in use.

Walkers are one of the most common causes of injury to infants. Research shows that they do not actually promote walking, but they can pose a great risk of injury to your child.

### TOYS FOR YOUR BABY:

Simple toys are the best; a ball to roll and hold, bath time toys, and household items such as spoons and lids to make "music." Squeaky toys and teething rings are safe toys for babies this age. They love music and nursery rhymes. Most of all they need your loving touches and the sound of your voice. Teach your child to trust.

### IMMUNIZATIONS:

KEEP YOUR BABY HEALTHY. Ask about your baby's shot schedule *at every doctor's visit*. Baby's record up to date and in a safe place. Bring it with you to the doctor's visit.