

Norman Pediatric Associates  
Parent Handout 9 Month Visit

**Profile:** The 9 - 12 month-old can go from lying down to a sitting position without help. He/she may pull up to a standing position on furniture. He/she will start to put one foot in front of the other and creep around furniture. Watch over your baby as he/she explores inside and outside the home. He/she enjoys banging, waving, and throwing toys. He/she will examine toys and other objects by poking them with his/her index finger. The 9 month old loves to explore, but do not be surprised if your baby is afraid of strangers, new places or new situations. He/she will imitate the change in tone in adult conversation and sounds, but will not understand the words yet. The baby will repeat sounds over and over again. He/she will resist doing things he/she doesn't want to do. The baby begins to try to imitate some parent behaviors and loves to show off for a family audience. Talk, sing, and read daily to your baby. He/she may respond to his/her own name at this age. Keep daily routines for your baby. Make the hour before bedtime loving and calm.

**Feeding/Nutrition:** Continue feeding breast milk or formula with iron for the next 3 months. Do not give whole milk until 1 year of age. Do not put anything in a bottle except for formula or water. Avoid juices. Give 3 meals per day. Offer softer table foods and a variety of soft finger foods in small pieces. You can begin Stage 3 foods. Avoid foods that may cause choking such as popcorn, uncooked carrot sticks, and hard candy. Include the 9-month-old in dinner with the family. Give only healthy foods. Do not give honey until after 1 year of age. Avoid desserts and sweet foods. Avoid forcing the baby to eat. Babies may say no to a food 10-12 times before they will try it. Be patient with your baby as he learns to eat without help. Use hugs and praise to reward or pacify the child instead of giving the bottle, foods, or a pacifier. You want the child to grow knowing that food is used for hunger, but comforting and happiness comes from love, approval, and closeness. Your baby still needs 400 IU of Vitamin D drop or you can give 0.5 ml of Poly-vi-sol drops 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:** Your baby will enjoy toys and simple games. We recommend simple safe toys such as cardboard or cloth books, small blocks, activity panels, balls, and mirrors. Toys may be handmade, like books made with pictures of family members and blocks made from small boxes. Pots and pans, measuring cups and spongy bath toys are good, and so are language games like saying "bye-bye", waving, simple songs, nursery rhymes, and books. Playing peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake will be as much fun for you as it is for your baby. Avoid use of TV, videos, and computers.

**Safety:** Learn CPR.

Empty buckets, pools, and tubs right after you use them. Place gates on stairs. Do not use a baby walker. Do not leave heavy or hot things on the table that your baby could pull over. Do not have tablecloths that can be pulled on. Put barriers around space heaters, and keep electrical cords out of baby's reach. Never leave your baby alone in or near water, even in a bath seat or ring. Be within arm's reach at all times. Keep poisons, medications, and cleaning supplies locked up and out of your baby's sight and reach. Install openable window guards on second story and higher windows and keep furniture away from windows. Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun. Keep your baby in a high chair or playpen when in the kitchen.

**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 1/4 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. Always wear your own seat belt and never drink and drive.

**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).

**Teeth/Oral Health:** 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 your baby's gums healthy is to massage them regularly with a wet wash cloth, much like you brush your own teeth. Clean your baby's teeth twice a day with a soft toothbrush. You may use a rice-grain size smear of fluoride toothpaste. 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 make time for 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:** Do not be surprised if your infant does not respond to commands given from across the room-at least not yet. Tell your baby in a nice way what to do ("time to eat"), rather than what not to do. Show and tell your baby in simple words what you want him/her to do. Avoid scaring or yelling at your baby. Most infants and toddlers need to be physically removed from potentially dangerous areas and redirected to a more suitable activity. Limit rules and be consistent with your enforcement of those rules. Structure your routine. Do things the way you want your baby to do them- you are your baby's role model. The "dropping game" will begin around this age. The child learns to drop things on purpose, especially from his/her high chair. If you immediately pick it up, this becomes a game and he/she will drop it again and again. You should not scold a baby for this game- it is his/her way of learning. Try not to use the word, no. Use "No!" only when your baby is going to get hurt or hurt others. Make your home and yard safe so that you do not have to say "No!" often.

**Shoes:** In the past, Doctors thought that babies needed shoes to support the feet and ankles, but now it is known that it is better to walk with bare feet. When the baby starts to walk, get inexpensive soft, well-ventilated baby shoes for when it's cold, and to prevent cuts and other injuries when walking outdoors. Socks without shoes are okay, but they are slippery for walking on wood or linoleum floors. A baby's shoes must not be tight: check them often, because baby's feet grow fast. There should be 1/4" or more at the end of the shoe.

**Separation anxiety:** Around this age the baby begins to understand that the mother is not a part of the baby, and could disappear-so the infant gets scared when his/her mother is out of sight. This is a normal stage of infant development. Keep good-byes short. Your baby will learn that separations are not permanent.

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