



# Growing Up Healthy

## You and Your 6-12 month old

Your 6 to 12 month old child will be developing their personality and way of doing things. Your child will grow and change at his/her own rate. Below is some information to help you understand your child. If you have concerns about your child's care, see **More Information** on the back of this pamphlet, or contact your local public health nurse.

### Your Needs

- Continue to be physically active, and include your baby.
- Make time for you and your partner.
- Look for breastfeeding support, parent and tot groups in your community.
- Traveling with your baby is easier now. Take your baby with you to enjoy community activities, friends and family.
- You may want to go out without your baby. Share information on keeping your baby safe with your chosen caregiver.
- If you're planning to go back to work in the next few months, and need full or part-time child care, now is the time to start considering your options.
- Talk to your employer about the support you may need to continue breastfeeding.

### Contact your health care provider to:

- Discuss any questions about you and your baby.
- Discuss feelings of depression or anxiety, or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.

### Your Baby's Needs

#### Love and Comfort

- Your baby is learning about his expanding world. He needs you to stay near as he becomes more active, and begins to explore.
- Daily routines for feeding, playing, and sleeping need to be flexible.
- Stay calm. Soothe your baby when he cries. 'Making strange' is normal, and will pass in a few months.
- Encourage learning but distract him from doing things that might harm him, e.g., putting fingers in an electrical outlet. Avoid spanking or slapping hands – that would teach him it's okay to hit.
- Your baby will develop the ability to trust his caregivers.

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## Crying

- A crying baby may need food, sleep, a diaper change, love, comforting, or a distraction.
- Sometimes your baby cries to relieve tension, and will need you to comfort her.
- Overtired babies will cry. It helps to have regular sleep times, including naps, and a comforting "go to sleep" routine.
- Try distracting your baby with singing, a toy or new activity when she's crying.
- If you feel frustrated by your baby's crying, put her in a safe place (crib or playpen), and go to another part of your home for a few minutes.
- Handle your baby gently. Shaking can cause permanent brain damage, blindness or even death. **Never shake a baby.**

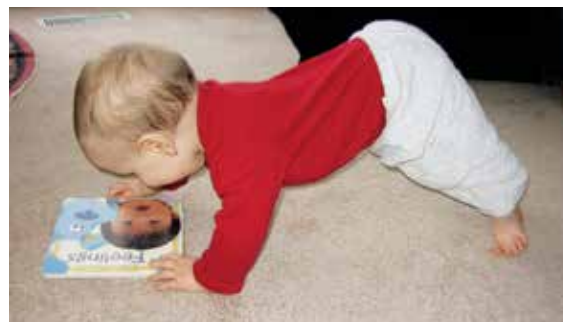
## Sleep

- Your baby will sleep five to six hour stretches or longer at night, with two naps during the day.
- Bedtime routines of bathing, cleaning baby's mouth and reading are important.

Start putting your baby to bed while he is calm but awake, so he can learn to self-soothe.

## Play and Move

- Your baby will be active during her waking hours. Limit use of car seats, highchairs, swings or strollers for long periods of time.
- Sing to her. Hold her hands, and clap in time to music. Dance around the room with her.
- Encourage your baby to creep and crawl on the floor.
- Use blocks or brightly coloured stacking toys to hide an object under a container, or place it just out of reach, and help her find it.
- Take your baby out for walks.
- Screen time, like TV and computer games, are discouraged as they are not active play.



## Play and Learn

- Talk to your baby; tell him what you're doing. He will jabber back to you.
- Your baby will turn to look at sounds. He will respond to his name and understand 'no' and 'bye-bye'.
- Read to your baby in a gentle, soft voice.
- He will try to make sounds and say words like "ba ba" or "na na".
- Encourage your baby to look at things around: people, places, or himself in the mirror.
- He will learn and experience pleasure through touch.
- Teach your baby the correct names of body parts including the genitals.



## Seeing and Hearing

- Your baby can see colour, and look at things you point to.
- She will drop toys, and look where they have gone.
- Your baby will look for hidden objects.
- She will look around to find the sources of sounds she hears.
- Eye doctors recommend an eye exam at 6 months of age.

## Feeding Relationship

- The introduction of family foods is an addition to breastfeeding. This is a time of change and transition.
- The relationship between you and your baby continues to be an important part of the feeding process as you begin to introduce family foods.



**Your baby is ready to eat solids at about 6 months, when he can sit up without support, hold his head up, and hold food in his mouth without pushing it out right away.**

- You decide when and where to feed your baby solid foods, and what food is offered at the family table.
- Bring him to the table with you whenever you eat. He loves being with you, and his is learning what eating is all about.
- He explores food the same what he explores the rest of the world by using his eyes, hands, nose and mouth.
- When your child is hungry, he will open his mouth and turn toward food. When he is full, he will turn his head away, push away or close his mouth.
- Do not coax, reward or bribe him to eat more food, finish all the food, or eat a certain food.
- Feeding routines are important. Keep mealtimes calm. Turn off all electronics, and put away toys and books. This helps the family focus on creating a pleasant eating environment.
- Take the pressure off eating. He will eat when he's hungry and stop when he's full. His appetite will go up and down as he grows.

**Expect a mess. It's part of learning how to eat. Wait until after mealtime to clean up dropped food, messy hands and face.**

## Feeding

- Your baby needs to eat more often than you do, and she has her own feeding pattern.
- Start by offering small tastes of healthy family food.
- Your baby may not eat every time you offer it. She may play with her food, or put food in and out of her mouth many times before she actually eats it.

- Learning to eat or trying new foods includes:
  - » seeing what you eat
  - » looking at food
  - » smelling food
  - » tasting and spitting
  - » tasting and swallowing
  - » eating one bite and stopping
  - » changing his mind about what he likes
- How your baby eats will depend on her interest and skill.
- Let her use her own hands.
- She may need help so you can offer food using a small spoon or your finger.
- Your baby can start to learn how to drink from an open cup. Start with small sips of water. It will take time and practice, so water doesn't run down her front or up her nose.

## Food Texture

Choose from healthy family foods, and progress to food with more texture as your baby develops.

- When your baby can sit without support at about 6 months, offer food 2-3 times a day. Offer mashed or semisolid foods without lumps. He can also try finger foods that dissolve easily in his mouth.
- When your baby starts to scoot, crawl or roll to places, at about 9 months, offer food 3-4 times a day. Offer ground or soft mashed foods with tiny soft lumps, and shredded or crunchy foods that dissolve, e.g. whole grain crackers.
- When the baby walks, at about 12 months, he is ready for a pattern that includes 3 meals and 2 snacks a day, using coarsely chopped foods with more texture, meats that are minced, diced or shredded, bite-sized pieces of food, strips of food, and finger food.
- **Remember** that at about 6 to 9 months he uses a munching chew (up and down).
- Encourage your baby to feed himself with his hands or a spoon.

## Nutrition

- Breast milk continues to be the main source of nutrition for the first year, even as your baby begins to eat solids, and feed herself.
- When introducing solid foods, start with Iron-rich foods such as:
  - » cooked meats, poultry, de-boned fish, or tofu;
  - » well cooked egg;
  - » lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans or other well-cooked legumes; or
  - » a single grain infant cereal.



- When you give non-meat sources of iron, also give a vitamin C rich food, like cooked broccoli, or ripe cantaloupe, to improve iron adsorption.
- Your baby does not need juice. If you choose to give 100% fruit juice, limit the amount to no more than 125 ml (4oz) per day.
- Wait until 9 to 12 months old (preferably 12 months) to offer homogenized, pasteurized whole cow's milk (3.25% MF). Begin by giving sips in an open cup with meals and snacks.
- Continue to offer homogenized milk until 2 years of age. It is too early to give your baby lower fat milk.
- Plant-based beverages (e.g. almond, rice, soy or coconut) are not suitable for children under 2 years of age. These drinks do not have enough nutrition to meet a growing baby's needs.



## Food Allergies

- Eating a wide variety of healthy family foods is the best way for your baby to be healthy.
- Include foods like fish, eggs, or peanut butter as waiting does not prevent food allergies. Offer single foods before offering mixtures. Wait 2 to 5 days between introducing new foods.
- If there is a family history (parent or sibling) of allergic disease or your baby has an allergy, get advice from your health care provider.
- If you think your baby is allergic to a food, stop giving him that food and get medical advice.

Call 911 or other emergency service if she shows any of these signs:

- » Swelling of the mouth, tongue or throat;
- » Trouble breathing, swallowing, or speaking;
- » Pale or blue colour of the face or lips;
- » Fainting or passing out; or
- » Hives that are spreading.

**Do not give your baby any small, hard, round foods like whole nuts, seeds, raisins, popcorn, candies, or gum. Food like these can cause choking.**



## Food Safety

- Always stay attentive to your baby while she is eating. Make sure she is sitting. It's not safe for her to have any food in her mouth while playing, or while you are driving.
- Wait until your baby is a year old before giving her honey of any type. Never add honey to your baby's food, water or formula. Never dip a soother in honey. These precautions reduce the danger of food poisoning from botulism.
- Always wash your hands, and prepare and store food with care.
- Avoid unpasteurized juice, cider, milk and milk products. Harmful bacteria from unpasteurized foods or raw milk could make your child sick. Read labels carefully.
- When offering nut butters, spread thinly on a whole grain cracker, or toast to make it easier to swallow.
- Offer your baby healthy foods that you serve the rest of the family, but change its texture based on age and stage of development.



## Build Strong Teeth

- Your child's first dental visit should be before his first birthday.
- **Lift the lip** to look at your child's gums and watch for new teeth that may be appearing. If your child has teeth, look for signs of tooth decay that may appear as white lines on the enamel, close to the gum line, or as brown spots.
- Fluoride varnish programs are available in your community. For more information, contact your local public health office.
- If your child's teeth have not appeared, wipe his gums with a clean, wet washcloth. If teeth are present brush your child's teeth with a child sized, soft-bristled toothbrush twice a day, especially at bedtime.
- Fluoridated toothpaste the size of a grain of rice is recommended for children under 3 years of age, with teeth, who are **at risk** of developing early childhood tooth decay.
- Your child does not have the dexterity to clean his teeth by himself. You will need to brush his teeth.
- Breastfeeding is encouraged to support proper jaw and muscle development which can assist with the correct positioning of teeth.
- NEVER put your child to bed with a bottle or training cup. Liquids containing sugar can pool in the mouth putting him at risk for tooth decay. Feed him before putting him to bed.
- Your child is able to learn how to use an open cup as early as 6 months of age.
- Keep your own mouth clean and healthy. This prevents spreading decay-causing germs to your child. Brush and floss twice a day, have regular check-ups and receive dental treatment as needed.

## Pacifier (Soother) Use

If a pacifier is used consider the following:

- Use the appropriate sized pacifier for your child. They are sized by age.
- Check it often for strength and tears.
- Do not coat with a sweet substance.
- Offer the pacifier only after and between feeding. Do not use the pacifier to delay or replace a feeding.
- The pacifier should be soft enough to flatten out against the roof of the mouth.
- Clean pacifiers frequently.
- Placing the pacifier in your mouth passes germs to your child. These germs can cause tooth decay and other diseases.



## Vitamin D

- Vitamin D supports healthy bone development.
- Talk to your public health nurse about your baby's need for vitamin D supplements.

## Growth

- Your baby's rate of growth directly affects her appetite. When she wants to eat more, it usually means she is going through a growth spurt.
- Your baby may need to feed longer or more often, including at night.
- Expect these changes in eating behaviour that come with changes in appetite. Let your baby decide how much or how little she will eat. She will show you when she is hungry or full.
- If your baby has healthy bowel patterns, eats according to appetite, gains weight and grows well, she is likely getting enough food.

## Pee and Poop

- Your baby's pee and poop patterns will change as he eats more solid foods.
- Poop will be darker in colour. It may remain soft, but it will be more formed.
- Your baby will often grunt, groan, and turn red in the face when he is pooping.



## Safety

### Tobacco-free home

- Passive smoking occurs when you or your baby breathe in second-hand smoke. Babies can also be harmed by coming into contact with the chemical residue from past smoking left on furniture, clothes, hair, and walls.
- Passive smoking may lead to problems such as asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, and ear infections.
- Keep your baby's world smoke-free.

### Falls

- Once your baby can stand, move the crib mattress to the lowest position, and keep it away from windows.

### Child-proofing Your Home

- Activities to childproof your home:
  - » cover electrical outlets;
  - » keep electrical and blind cords out of reach;
  - » put safety gates on stairs;
  - » cover sharp edges of furniture;
  - » put safety locks on cupboards; and
  - » remove unsteady furniture.

### Never Shake a Baby

- Put your child in a safe place and take a break if you are frustrated by her crying.

## Suffocation and Strangulation

- If you have venetian blinds, put cords well out of reach to avoid suffocation.
- Keep electrical cords out of reach of your baby.
- Do not use a scarf or ties.

**Supervision is the best way to prevent injuries.**

## Car Seats

- Buckle your baby in a properly installed car seat every time she rides in a vehicle.
- Use a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of your vehicle.
- Every time your child travels in a vehicle she needs to be in a properly secured child safety seat. Be sure your baby is 10 kg (22 lbs), walking, and older than 12 months before moving her to a forward facing car seat.
- Any aftermarket product that interferes with the proper positioning and adjustment of the child restraint, harness or other safety features of the car seat, should not be used.
- A trained technician can help make sure your car seat is installed properly. You can find a trained technician at <https://www.sgi.sk.ca/carseats>.



## Bath Time

- Always test the temperature of the bath water before putting your baby in the bath.
- Bath water should feel warm and not hot to your wrist, inner arm or elbow.
- Your baby's skin burns 4 times faster than your skin.
- Supervise your baby while he is in the bath tub. He can easily fall over or wiggle his way under the water.
- Young children can drown in a small amount of water. Always supervise your child when he is in water.

## Alcohol and Drug Use

- Avoid the use of drugs and alcohol when caring for your baby.
- These substances affect your ability to respond to your baby's needs, and impact your judgement.

## Common Concerns

- Fever is a serious concern and occurs quickly. Seek medical assistance.
- Fluid-filled teething rings may leak. Using them is not recommended.
- Teething ointments and gels are not recommended, as they may numb your baby's throat and cause choking.

To ease teething discomfort, rub your baby's gums with a soft toothbrush, or let him chew on a clean, cold teething ring or a wet face cloth.



## Medicines/poisons

- Keep in mind your baby will begin to open lower cupboards.
- Store chemicals and poisons out of reach of infants.
- Be aware of any poisonous plants in the house.
- Keep medicine, cleaning products, lighters, cosmetics, pet foods, and alcohol locked away.

## Immunizations

- At six months, your baby should have had three immunization appointments.
- The next immunization appointment is at 12 months.
- Vaccines can protect your child from some diseases.
- These diseases can make your child very sick and, in some cases, cause death.
- Getting your child vaccinated against diseases helps stop these diseases from spreading. This protects you, your child and your community.

## Other Family Members

- Young children have difficulty showing the excitement they are feeling. They act loving to your baby, and then push him away the next minute.
- Encourage older children to help with your baby in an age appropriate way.
- Spend time with older children by themselves. Reassure them they are loved and wanted.
- Share this resource with family members and others who spend time with your baby.



## Family Pets

- Do not leave your baby alone with pets. Even if you think a pet is "safe", reactions to small children can be instinctual, and result in injury and at times, death.
- Pets can carry some disease that can transfer to humans. Wash your hands after handling pets or their waste.
- Encourage positive experiences between your baby and your pet(s).

## Water

- Clean safe water is important for the entire family for meal preparation, drinking, and cleaning.
- If you use your own water source, your water should be tested twice a year (such as in the spring and fall), or if concerns arise. The Water Security Agency has more information about this.
- If you have been notified of a boil water advisory in your area, follow the precautions outlined by your health region.

## More Information

Here are some trusted websites:

<b>Saskatchewan Immunization Fact Sheets and Caring for Your Child's Fever</b>	<a href="http://www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize">www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize</a>
<b>Ministry of Health – Child Health and Parenting</b>	<a href="http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/wellness-and-prevention/children-health-and-parenting">www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/wellness-and-prevention/children-health-and-parenting</a>
<b>Saskatchewan Poison Center</b>	1-866-454-1212
<b>Immunize Canada</b>	<a href="http://www.immunize.ca">www.immunize.ca</a>
<b>The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute</b>	<a href="http://www.skprevention.ca">www.skprevention.ca</a>
<b>Government of Canada</b>	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health.html</a>
<b>International Breastfeeding Centre</b>	<a href="http://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/">ibconline.ca/information-sheets/</a>
<b>Dietitians of Canada</b>	<a href="http://www.dietitians.ca">www.dietitians.ca</a>
<b>Caring for Kids</b>	<a href="http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca">www.caringforkids.cps.ca</a>
<b>Safe Kids Canada</b>	<a href="http://www.parachutecanada.org/safekidscanada">www.parachutecanada.org/safekidscanada</a>
<b>SGI Care Seat Information</b>	<a href="https://www.sgi.sk.ca/carseats">https://www.sgi.sk.ca/carseats</a>
<b>Aftermarket Car Seat Products</b>	<a href="https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safedrivers-childsafety-notices-d200401-menu-336.htm">https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safedrivers-childsafety-notices-d200401-menu-336.htm</a>
<b>Facts for Garage Sale Vendors</b>	<a href="http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/garage-eng.php">www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/garage-eng.php</a>
<b>Maternal Depression Online</b>	<a href="https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/wellbeing-program">https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/wellbeing-program</a>
<b>Low Risk Drinking Guidelines</b>	<a href="http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Al-Anon</b>	<a href="https://sk-alanon.ca/includes/sk-alanon_index4.php">https://sk-alanon.ca/includes/sk-alanon_index4.php</a>
<b>Smoker's Helpline</b>	1-877-513-5333
<b>Go Smoke Free</b>	<a href="http://www.gosmokefree.ca">www.gosmokefree.ca</a>
<b>Water Security Agency</b>	<a href="http://www.wsask.ca/Water-info/Domestic-Water-Well-Management">www.wsask.ca/Water-info/Domestic-Water-Well-Management</a>
<b>Daycare</b>	<a href="https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/family-and-social-support/child-care/child-care-in-saskatchewan">https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/family-and-social-support/child-care/child-care-in-saskatchewan</a>
<b>Pre-Kindergarten</b>	<a href="https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/prek-12-education-early-learning-and-schools/prekindergarten">https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/prek-12-education-early-learning-and-schools/prekindergarten</a>
<b>Pregnancy and Parenting in the Workplace</b>	<a href="http://saskatchewanhumanrights.ca/pub/documents/publications/PPW_Imposition.pdf">http://saskatchewanhumanrights.ca/pub/documents/publications/PPW_Imposition.pdf</a>

For more information and advice, contact:

**HealthLine – 811 (24 hour service)**, or your public health nurse, or your primary care provider.

