Well-Baby Checkup: 6 Months

CHILD'S NAME	DOB	DATE OF VISIT	NEXT VISIT	LENGTH	PERCENTILE	WEIGHT	PERCENTILE

Nutrition

The primary source of food for your baby will still be breastmilk or formula to grow. However, your baby can be fed other types of food such as infant cereal, pureed (liquefied) fruits and vegetables and water.

Feeding Solids

You can feed your baby solid foods about twice a day. Pick a time when your baby is hungry, but not so hungry that he or she is upset. Do not give your baby any food that requires chewing at this age, or any food that can be a choking hazard.

- You can start with dry infant rice cereal to be mixed with breastmilk or formula.
- After that, try adding mashed or pureed vegetables, fruits and other foods. Mash or puree them until they are smooth and easy for your baby to swallow.
    - Introduce one "single ingredient" new food from any food group every 3 to 5 days by using a soft spoon. Look for any reactions.
- The earlier vegetables are introduced, the more he or she is likely to easily accept them.

For different methods in starting solids, such as baby-led weaning, talk to your health care provider for more information.

Feeding Tips & Reminders

- Do not let your baby have more than 32 ounces of breastmilk or formula per 24 hours. If your baby eats that amount and still shows signs that he or she is hungry, try increasing solid foods.
- Between 6 and 12 months, you can start switching from a bottle to a cup when feeding your baby.
    - o Only give water in spill-proof cups with valves. This can help prevent future cavities.
- Do not give honey to your baby. Giving honey to babies under 12 months can cause your baby to get seriously sick.
- Do not replace breastmilk or formula with cow's milk until he or she is at least 12 months.

Teething

At some time between 4 to 15 months, your baby's first tooth will start to show. The first 2 middle teeth on the bottom show first, followed by the 2 middle teeth on the top. Your baby will drool a lot; it is a normal part of the teething process. Keep your baby's teeth and gums healthy by cleaning them 2 times a day with a washcloth or soft toothbrush.

Teething Tips

If your baby is teething, here are some tips to help make your baby feel better.

- Cuddle, rock or walk around with your baby. Showing love can help comfort your baby.
- Give a teething aid that your baby can chew on such as a firm rubber teething ring or even a cool, wet washcloth.
- Use a clean finger to massage swollen gums for 2 minutes at a time.

Immunizations

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies receive their third set of immunizations at 6 months of age. Having your baby fully vaccinated may also help lower your baby's risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Talk to your baby's health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Sleep Time

Each baby is different and has his or her own sleep pattern. At 6 months your baby will sleep an average of 12 to 16 hours (including naps) per day.

- Play with your baby actively in the afternoon or early evening to encourage him or her to stay awake a little longer. That may help your baby sleep longer at night.
- You can feed your baby before bedtime, but try not to feed him or her to sleep. Do not prop a bottle of breastmilk or formula when feeding.
- You want your baby to be somewhat awake, but sleepy when you put him or her down in the crib. This can help teach your baby to learn to go to sleep on his or her own. It is not unusual for babies to cry or fuss before falling asleep.

No Digital Screens for Babies

It is very important for brain development and healthy parent-child connections that babies under 18 months have no screen time. Even if your baby isn't looking directly at a digital screen like a cellphone, computer or tablet, the lights and sounds may still cause distress and sleep problems. Bond with your baby by putting the phone away.

Safety Tips & Reminders

SUN SAFETY OUTDOORS

When outdoors, keep your baby out of direct sunlight, especially when the sun's rays are the strongest, which is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during summer months. Have your baby wear a hat or sun covering that is lightweight and covers most of his or her body. You can use sunscreen with a SPF of 25 or higher on your baby once he or she is 6 months or older. Always test an area of your baby's skin with sunscreen to check for an allergic reaction before applying to large areas. Make sure to follow the product instructions on applying sunscreen and when to reapply. Ask your baby's health care provider if you have any questions.

KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE – CHILDPROOFING

Your baby will soon be rolling, scooting, crawling and using other ways to get around. Make sure to have baby gates blocking stairs and to have any hazardous chemicals or products locked up and out of reach.

- **Tip:** Check your home to make sure anything small enough to choke on is put away and not near your baby. If the item is small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube, your baby can choke on it.
- **Tip:** You can find great resources to keep your child safe and childproofing checklists from Safekids.org.

POISON CONTROL (1-800-222-1222)

Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 if your baby has swallowed, touched or inhaled for any toxic or poisonous substance. Consider saving this number on your phone.

CAR SEAT – REAR-FACING

Always place your baby in an approved, rear-facing car seat. You can find out if your car seat is approved from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at NHTSA.gov/therightseat.

Reaching Milestones & Activities

All babies develop at their own rates. Keeping track of your baby's development is important. Your job is to help your baby to learn new things when he or she is ready.

At 6 months, your baby may start to:

- Support weight on legs and bounce when standing.
- Begin to say consonant sounds (jabbering like the sounds of letters "m" or "b").
- Respond to sounds by making sounds.
- Enjoy looking at his or her reflection in a mirror.
- Respond to other peoples' emotion and often seems happy.

If your baby was born earlier than expected, reaching his or her milestones may be "off schedule" a bit. Talk to your baby's health care provider about any concerns or questions you may have.

Help Your Baby Learn and Grow!

As your baby grows and develops, there are many things you can do to help your baby get a good start in life and gain independence.

INTERESTING OBJECTS TO PLAY

Babies are interested in textures and sounds. You can put a graspable object (such as a rattle) in your baby's hand and very gently tug on it. This can help build muscle as your baby will try to resist your efforts. You can also provide a variety of age-appropriate toys that make noises or have interesting textures for your baby to feel. Always watch your baby when he or she is around objects.

CONTINUE READING

Choose books with simple pictures and bright colors. You can point to and name objects in the pictures. Even though your baby cannot understand the words, he or she loves the sound of your voice. Reading and showing your baby pictures can help develop his or her eye muscles. The more words your baby hears over time, the more words he or she will eventually learn.

SUPERVISED FLOOR TIME

Give your baby floor time to encourage stretching and kicking which can strengthen his or her muscles. Always watch your baby and never leave him or her alone. You can put a toy just out of reach to encourage baby to move to try to reach it. This works best if you are on the floor and involved by smiling and giving encouraging words.

Caring for You and Your Family

When you take care of yourself, you are better able to take care of your family. Make sure to spend time with your close family and friends. If you feel sad, anxious or depressed, talk to your health care provider.

Calling Your Health Care Provider

Even healthy babies get sick. Understanding the signs and symptoms of illness is important, so you know when to call a health care provider or 911. Make sure you have your baby's health care provider information saved somewhere that you can quickly and easily find. At Avera, caring for you and your family's health is our highest priority.

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