In this letter you’ll find helpful resources and learn about:

- What to expect at your baby’s well-child visits.
- Avoiding juice.
- Eating together as a family
- Switching from a bottle to a cup.
- Taking good care of your baby’s teeth.
- How relationships are important for your baby’s growth and development.

- Preventing falls.
- Car seats and airbags.
- Water safety.
- Antibiotic use.

Watch Me Grow – 9 Months

Well-Child Visits

Keep your baby healthy

Regular checkups are important even for healthy babies. Your baby’s doctor or nurse will check his or her growth and development and answer any questions you have. Take your baby’s Lifetime Immunization Record and Childhood Health Record to every checkup. If your baby needs any missing vaccine doses, catch up now. Being fully immunized helps prevent serious diseases, such as whooping cough, meningitis, and flu. Vaccines can prevent diseases that may lead to pneumonia, blood infections, brain damage, and death in children. Make sure you, your baby’s siblings, and your baby’s other caregivers are up-to-date on immunizations. This helps protect your baby even more. To access your and your family’s immunization records online visit wa.myir.net.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Avoid juice

Juice is not recommended for babies under one year old. Juice may make babies less hungry for healthy foods. It may also be bad for new teeth that are forming. Your baby’s main drink should still be breastmilk or formula, but give your baby a little water in a cup to practice drinking from a cup.

Eat together as a family

Your baby learns about eating by watching you eat. Talk with your baby about new foods he or she is tasting, smelling, and touching. Small pieces of food that are easy to pick up and soft enough to squish are fun to touch and taste. Offer small pieces of whole grain dry cereal, soft fruit, cooked pasta, cooked vegetables, and meat.

Even if your baby has some teeth, he or she is not old enough to eat hard foods. Babies this age can choke on hard foods, such as hard candy, nuts, popcorn, and raw carrots. Foods, such as grapes or hot dogs, can also cause choking. Cut all food into small, bite-size pieces. To reduce the risk of choking stay near your baby and watch while he or she eats.

If you breastfeed, keep going! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children breastfeed for at least the first year of life and for as long as mom and baby choose to continue.

Switch from a bottle to a cup

By age one, your baby should drink from a cup at meals and snack times. Keep helping your baby practice drinking from a cup.

Don’t choose a cup with a ‘no-spill valve.’ The only way your baby can get liquid out of many no-spill cups is to suck. This prevents him or her from learning to sip. A snap-on or screw-on lid can reduce spills and still allow your baby to sip. Give small amounts of liquid to limit the mess if spilled.

Here are some other tips:

- Use a cup with two handles to make it easier for your baby to hold.
- Use a cup with a weighted base to prevent it from tipping over.
- Offer only water unless it is mealtime. At mealtime, offer breastmilk or formula in a cup.

Oral Health

Keep your baby’s first teeth healthy

The health of your baby’s first teeth is very important. First teeth help your baby eat and speak well. They hold space for adult teeth, which helps prevent teeth from growing in crooked. Cavities in baby teeth may lead to cavities in adult teeth. Here are some tips to keep your baby’s gums and teeth healthy:

- Clean your baby’s gums every night before bed with a moist cloth or a small soft toothbrush.
- Brush your baby’s teeth twice a day with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste when your baby’s teeth first come in.
- Lift your baby’s lips once a month to look carefully at his or her teeth. If you notice white or brown spots or bleeding gums, visit the dentist or doctor.
- Remove your nipple from your baby’s mouth if your baby falls asleep while breastfeeding. Formula or milk that stays in your baby’s mouth while sleeping may cause cavities.
- Avoid sharing your toothbrush, eating utensils, and cups with your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay may easily spread from your mouth to your baby’s mouth.
- Have your baby’s teeth checked by a dentist or doctor by age one.
Growth and Development

Your baby's relationships are important
Your baby's brain develops constantly and every moment is important. Your baby’s relationship with you and other caregivers is very critical for health and development. The everyday things you and your baby’s caregivers do help his or her brain develop. Your baby learns from you and everyone that interacts with him or her. Here are some tips on how to interact with your baby:

- Talk to your baby about what will happen next as you do things with him or her, such as change diapers, feed, and bathe.
- Cuddle with your baby while you talk about the pictures in his or her books.
- Play copycat games. Make a funny sound and then wait for your baby to make it. Copy his or her sounds, too.

Your baby may start to be more comfortable around people he or she spends the most time with and may be more anxious around strangers. Remind everyone who takes care of your baby how important they are to him or her.

Talk to me. It helps my brain develop.

Your baby’s development
It’s important to find out if your baby is on track for healthy development or if he or she may need some support. Each baby develops at his or her own pace. If at nine months your baby does not sit up or make babbling sounds, or if you have any other development questions, help is available. Talk with your baby’s doctor or nurse or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to learn more. They can help you check your baby’s development and connect you with the Early Support for Infant and Toddlers Program in your community.

Your baby’s relationships are important

Safety

Prevent falls
A fall may cause cuts, broken teeth and bones, or a head injury. The best way to keep your baby safe is to stay close. A fall may cause cuts, broken teeth and bones, or a head injury. The best way to keep your baby safe is to stay close.

- Move chairs that might tip over so your baby can’t climb on them.
- Move furniture away from windows. Don’t put your baby’s crib near a window or any hanging cords.
- Remember that window screens won’t stop your baby from falling out of a window. Install window stops or guards that can be removed by an adult in an emergency.
- Check the side rails of your baby’s crib. If they’re not high enough, lower the mattress.
- Keep gates closed at the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure the gate stays in place when you push on it.

Keep your baby’s car seat rear facing
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends your baby ride in a rear-facing car seat until at least two years of age or until he or she is too heavy or too tall based on the manufacturer’s instructions. Use a rear-facing seat as long as possible. It gives your baby the best protection because it cradles his or her body better than a forward-facing seat. The rear-facing position helps support your baby’s head, neck, and spine. This helps spread the force caused by a crash more evenly across your baby’s entire body and reduces the risk of a neck injury.

Contact Washington’s Child Passenger Safety Program with any concerns at 360-725-9860. Visit safercar.gov/parents to find the nearest car seat inspection services.

Air bags are dangerous to babies and children
Air bags can seriously injure or kill a baby or child in the front seat, even in a minor crash. Some vehicles, such as pick-up trucks and sports cars, have air bags but no backseat. These vehicles often have an air bag on/off switch. Always check with your vehicle’s manufacturer before you put a car seat in the front seat of any vehicle. Washington State law requires all children to ride in the backseat until age 13, when possible.

Questions about air bags? Visit nhtsa.gov/equipment/air-bags for more information.

Stay with your baby in the bath
A baby can drown quickly and quietly in only a few inches of water! Stay with your baby the entire time he or she is in the tub. Do not leave the room, for even a second. Even if your baby sits up well or uses a bath seat, do not leave him or her alone or with an older child.

Don’t leave me alone in the bath. Stay with me the whole time.

Antibiotic use
When your baby gets sick, you may want to give medicine to help him or her feel better. However, do not expect your doctor to always give your baby antibiotics. Viruses cause colds and antibiotics do not kill viruses.

For the Health of All Our Children
Child Profile is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

This publication was made possible, in part, by cooperative agreement #IP000762 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This letter is available in other formats. Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay).

Don’t leave me alone in the bath. Stay with me the whole time.