



Watch Me Grow – 9 Months

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

- *What to expect at your baby's well-child visits.*
- *Limiting 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.*

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Keep your baby healthy

Regular medical checkups are important for all babies. Your baby's doctor or nurse will check your baby's 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. Vaccines can prevent diseases that may lead to pneumonia, blood infections, brain damage, and death in children. Being fully vaccinated helps prevent serious diseases.

Make sure you, your baby's siblings, and your baby's other caregivers are up-to-date on vaccines. This helps protect your baby even more. To see and download your family's vaccine records online visit myirmobile.com.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Limit juice

Juice is generally not needed for babies under 1 year old. Juice may make babies less hungry for the foods that help them grow. It may also be bad for new teeth that are forming. Your baby's main drink should still be human milk 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 they taste, smell, and touch. 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, they are 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 they eat.

If you breast or chest feed, keep going! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends feeding children human milk for at least the first year of life and for as long as you and your baby choose to continue.



Keep introducing me to new yummy foods!

Switch from a bottle to a cup

By age 1, your baby should drink from a cup at meals and snack times. Keep helping your baby practice drinking from a cup.

Do not 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 your baby 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 2 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 human milk or formula in a cup.



Let me start using a cup to drink water.

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.
- When your baby's teeth first come in, brush them twice a day with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Lift your baby's lips once a month and look carefully at their teeth. If you notice pale or dark spots or bleeding gums visit the dentist or doctor.
- Remove your nipple or bottle's nipple from your baby's mouth if your baby falls asleep while feeding. Formula or human milk that stays in your baby's mouth while sleeping may cause cavities.
- Do not share 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 1.

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 important for health and development. The everyday things you and your baby's caregivers do help their brain develop. Your baby learns from you and everyone that interacts with them. 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 them, such as change diapers, feed, and bathe.
- Cuddle with your baby while you talk about the pictures in their books.
- Play copycat games. Make a funny sound and then wait for your baby to make it. Copy your baby's sounds, too.

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



Talk to me. It helps my brain develop.

Your baby's development

Each baby develops at their own pace. If at 9 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 you can call the Help Me Grow Washington Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

They can help you check your baby's development and connect you with the Early Support for Infant and Toddlers programs in your community.

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. Here are some other ways to help prevent falls:

- Move chairs that might tip over so your baby cannot climb on them.
- Move furniture away from windows. Do not put your baby's crib near a window or any hanging cords.
- Remember that window screens will not 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 2 years of age or until they are 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 their 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.

For more information to keep your family safe in the car or about Washington's child passenger safety laws visit wacarseats.com.

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.

For more information about air bags, visit nhtsa.gov/equipment/air-bags.

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 they are in the tub. Do not leave the room, even for a second. Even if your baby sits up well or uses a bath seat, do not leave them 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 them feel better. However, do not expect your doctor to always give your baby antibiotics. Viruses cause colds and antibiotics do not kill viruses. Always ask your doctor or nurse before giving medicine to your baby.

Resources

- **Online vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Child development resources:** Help Me Grow Washington Hotline 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or visit helpmegrowwa.org/developmental-screening
- **Car seat safety tips:** wacarseats.com
- **Air bag information:** nhtsa.gov/equipment/air-bags

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your baby is 12 months old with information on:

- Your child's first dental appointment.
- Pregnancy planning.
- Locking up poisons.
- Creating a media use plan for your family.

For the Health of All Our Children

Watch Me Grow Washington is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

 @WatchMeGrowWA  www.watchmegrowwa.org