

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR 6 MONTH-OLDS

VACCINES:

- * DTaP #3 - prevents diphtheria, tetanus (“Lock-jaw”), and pertussis (“Whooping Cough”). DTaP may cause fever and soreness; acetaminophen (Tylenol, Feverall, and store brands) may help.
- * Polio #3 - prevents polio, a serious viral illness that causes paralysis.
- * Hepatitis B #3 - prevents hepatitis B, a virus that infects the liver and also causes liver cancer.
- * Hib #3 (Haemophilus influenzae type b) - prevents Hib bacteria, a germ that causes severe infections like meningitis, airway (throat) infections, blood infections (“sepsis”), and even ear infections.
- * PCV-13 #3 - prevents 13 types of pneumococcus bacteria, a germ that causes severe infections like meningitis, pneumonia, and blood infections, as well as more common ones like ear infections.
- * Rotavirus #3 – helps prevent rotavirus, a virus causing severe diarrhea. This vaccine currently is not required for day care or school but is highly recommended.
- * Influenza #1 (flu) - prevents influenza, a serious viral illness (given during flu season, typically Oct-March).

- * Household members living with infants are strongly encouraged to receive the flu and whooping cough vaccines. Please contact your primary care provider.

DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:

Speech/language

- * Babies this age smile and laugh responsively
- * Babies this age start to make vowel sounds ("ooh") and other baby noises. Babbling is fun!
- * In the next few months, your baby may start to babble more and make sounds that resemble consonants or words like “papa” (without knowing their meaning though).

Motor

- * By now, most babies can roll over.
- * Many can also sit with support.
- * Babies at this age start to reach for toys and grasp them. Some will be starting to transfer objects from one hand to the other.
- * Many also start to be able to bear some weight on their legs.
- * In the next few months, by 9 months of age, your baby may begin to crawl and pull himself up to standing.

Social/play

- * Infants at this age like to copy sounds.
- * They start to enjoy toys such as rattles, rings, squeaky toys, stuffed toys, and dolls. At this age babies play with toys by putting them into their mouths and feeling them with their hands. Play actively with your baby using mirrors, floor gyms, and colorful toys to hold.
- * Babies also like to hear music - sing to your baby! Read picture books with your baby, too!
- * Some will start to have fun playing peek-a-boo.

Behavior

- * Some infants may begin to be afraid of strangers. This is called "stranger anxiety." Spend a little time helping your baby during transitions, like when dropping off at a new daycare center.
- * Babies will develop better sleep habits when a routine is used. Put your baby to sleep awake or drowsy, on his back, and in a safe crib at the same time each day for naps and nighttime. Try not to have naps only in the car or stroller. Start trying to create a situation where your child is able to fall asleep without needing help from you or a pacifier or other aid. No bottles in bed!
- * *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems* by Dr. Richard Ferber can be a very useful book to help you learn about babies' and children's sleep habits as is *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Dr. Marc Weissbluth. Also try *Good Night, Sleep Tight* by Kim West.
- * In the next few months, by 9-12 months of age, you may notice that your baby starts to get fearful of being separated from his parent or primary caregiver.

NUTRITION and EATING BEHAVIORS:

- * If you are still breastfeeding, that's great! Plan for pumping and storage of breast milk.
- * Keep using breast milk or formula with iron until one year of age. Your child should be drinking about 24-32 ounces per day. If he seems to need more because of hunger, it may be that he is not getting enough of other types of food.
- * It is time to switch to cups. Give a sippy cup with water if your baby seems thirsty. The earlier you switch to sippy cups, the easier it is. Never microwave a bottle or sippy cup.
- * You should start feeding your baby 2 - 3 meals of solid baby foods each day. This is a good time to start to use a high chair for feeding.
- * Your baby's diet should include cereal (with iron), fruits, vegetables and meats. Meat is the best source of iron for a baby, and now is the time when your baby needs to get a lot of iron from the foods

that she eats. Iron is critical for brain development and blood cell production.

- * Babies need fluoride for their teeth. 2-6 ounces (or more) of tap water with fluoride per day gives your baby enough fluoride for healthy teeth. This can be supplied as tap water, filtered tap water, or formula prepared with tap water. Bottled water may not provide enough fluoride. Check with your baby's doctor or nurse if you have questions about this. If your water supply does not contain fluoride, your provider can give you a prescription for fluoride drops. Also, as your baby's teeth come in, you should clean them as part of your bedtime routine with a baby toothbrush or cloth. Pediatric dentists recommend using a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste even with infants.
- * In the next few months, by 9 months of age, you should establish a regular schedule of 3 meals each day and start having mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks. The amount of breastmilk and formula should decrease as they become less important as sources of nutrition. Make sure you have switched to sippy cups.

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * Call on others for help when you need it. Invite friends over or join a parent group. Ask us about helpful resources if you are alone. You can talk with us about safety or social concerns.
- * Always use a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- * To prevent choking, feed your baby only very soft, pureed foods. Keep small objects and plastic bags away from your baby.
- * Lower the crib mattress to its lowest setting when your baby begins to stand. Use a crib with slats close together — 2 3/8 inches apart or less. When your baby is in the crib, make sure the drop side is up. Remember that six month-old babies still should sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of SIDS (crib-death).
- * Do not use soft, fluffy bedding or stuffed animals in the crib.
- * Think about using a playpen for times when your baby cannot be held. Use a mesh playpen with weaves less than 1/4 inches apart.
- * Your baby can roll now. Never leave him alone on a couch, bed or changing table.
- * This is the time to make your home safe for a baby. We call this "childproofing." Your child will soon be able to move and get into everything. Medicines, cleaning supplies, small objects that can choke (pennies, paper clips, etc.), breakables, electric cords and sockets all look like toys to a baby. Store these objects in locked or out-of-reach cabinets. Ask for a safety checklist.
- * Prevent burns by setting your hot water heater for a temperature of 120 F or lower. Do not drink hot liquids while holding your baby.

- Turn pot handles inward when cooking on the stove. Do not leave hot irons within reach of your baby and be sure to turn them off when done using.
- * Never leave your baby alone in the bath, even in a bath seat or ring.
 - * A car seat is required and should face the back of the car until 2 years of age. The middle of the back seat is the best location.
 - * Rolling walkers are DANGEROUS. They do not help a child learn to walk and should never be used.
 - * Install a well fitting safety gate at all stairways to which the child has access. Keep couches and beds away from window sills on upper floors of your home.
 - * No smoking in the house! We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. Even the smoke on your clothes, hair, and breath can affect your child's health and development. Ask us for information on how to quit.
 - * Find out if your home has lead paint or other lead poisoning hazards. Ask your landlord if you do not know. Ask us if you have questions about this and be sure to let us know if you give your baby any herbal medicines or traditional medicines, especially if made overseas.

NEXT VISIT: age 9 months for a check-up/physical and as needed for other problems, illnesses, and injuries

We will talk about providing structure and teaching good behavior to your baby, introducing new foods and establishing a mealtime routine, helping your baby learn, car seat safety, and more on safety at home. Try to think of three questions to ask. Write them down and be sure to bring the list with you.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

The internet can be an excellent source of information on child health and development. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.

Need help with breastfeeding?

Meet with a lactation consultant and other breastfeeding mothers at the Cambridge Health Alliance Breastfeeding Support Drop-in Program, located at 8 Camelia Avenue in the Cambridge Hospital driveway. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10AM to 12PM. No appointment is necessary!

More information is available from these sources:

Zipmilk	www.zipmilk.org
Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program	(800) 942-1007
La Leche League	(800) LA LECHE
Nursing Mothers' Council	(617) 244-5102
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition	www.massbfc.org
International Lactation Consultant Association	www.ilca.org
National Women's Health Information Center	(800) 994-9662

Poisoning help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection: 1-866-SEATCHECK

Check out *Bright Futures* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Visit%20Forms%20by%20Age%20110/6%20Month/A.Inf.PH.6month.pdf>

Check out *Healthy Children* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

www.healthychildren.org

Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for parent resources at:

[Http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx](http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx)

Find us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CHAPediatrics>

Revised January 2014