

SKAGIT PEDIATRICS, LLP

2101 Little Mountain Lane

Mount Vernon WA 98274

Phone: (360) 428-2622



NINE MONTH WELL CHILD CHECK



NAME: _____

WEIGHT: _____ HEIGHT: _____ HEAD SIZE: _____

Development: Your 9 month old is much more independent now than just a few months ago. Three months ago your baby was able to sit alone for just a minute or two. Now your baby can sit without your hands supporting him for long periods of time, and probably can even move from lying on his tummy into a sitting position by himself.

Most 9 month olds enjoy sitting and playing with objects within their reach. Let your 9 month old sit on the floor and put toys or other objects that are safe for him to pick up near him. Watch how your baby will play with the objects, pointing at them first with his finger, then reaching out and picking them up, turning them over, banging them on the floor, and putting them in his mouth. If you give him some small blocks and a pot, he'll put the blocks in the pot and then take them out again, over and over. He's learning about his world as he plays. If it's a wooden spoon he picks up he learns about hard things; if it's a cloth napkin he learns about softness. Be careful though when you put him on the floor that everything within his reach is safe for him to pick up.

Most 9 month olds are starting to learn to move about on their own. Watch as your baby gets on his hands and knees and rocks, or reaches forward placing one hand on the floor and then the other, as he tries to crawl. Not all babies crawl on their hands and knees. Some move about by scooting backwards on their bottoms, some crawl on their hands and feet with their legs straight and their bottoms up in the air, some use just their arms to pull their body as they squirm forward. Some babies never crawl at all. Some babies just prefer rolling to get to where they want to be. What's important is not how your baby moves about, but that you allow your baby opportunities to move about by putting him down on the floor or in a playpen if your floor isn't safe.

Remember how when your baby was 4 months old he loved to stand? Watch now as he tries to pull himself to a stand hanging onto a couch or chair. Soon he'll be moving sideways as he holds onto the furniture.

As much as 9 month olds love to move on their own, they also love to move with you as you hold them in your arms. Turn on some music or sing as you dance with your baby. See how your baby loves to turn with you, move sideways with you, sway with you. Lift your baby up into the air above your head and hear him laugh.

Nine month olds love to look at things upside down. Watch your 9 month old smile with pleasure if you hold him upside down.

Your 9 month old is learning how to communicate with you as fast as he is learning how to move about. Listen to all the different sounds he

can make, and talk back to him. If he growls, try growling back. If he says mama, say mama back—and if you're his mom, point at yourself as you say it. By 1 year of age he'll probably be calling you "mama".

As your 9 month old learns to talk by experimenting with sounds, he also is learning to communicate with gestures. He may reach his arms up toward you when he wants to be picked up. Some 9 month olds wave bye-bye, some play patatacake.

Behavior: Though 9 month olds are becoming more independent, they still want to be with you. Your baby may cling to you when you go to visits friends or grandparents. She may stare at strangers for a while before giving them a hesitant smile. She may cry when you take her to a babysitter, even if she's gone there happily many times before. This separation and stranger anxiety is normal behavior for a nine month old.

Feeding: Your 9 month old is probably eating foods. Some will be eating pureed foods, others may be eating table foods. As your baby is able to eat table foods, allow her to feed herself with her fingers. Just as your baby learns about hardness, softness and smoothness from the objects she feels while playing with her toys, she will learn about other textures and about temperature while playing with her food. She'll learn about slimy, wet, sticky, cold and warm as she feeds herself bits of cut up casserole or soft cooked vegetables. Allowing your baby to feed herself finger foods also helps develop her eye-hand coordination.

Many 9 month olds are eating three meals a day. Most have cereal and fruit for breakfast, fruit and vegetables for lunch, and cereal and vegetables for dinner. Nine months is a good time to add chicken or beef to your baby's diet. Your baby doesn't need dessert. Your baby doesn't need juice. Teach your baby lifelong healthy eating habits now.

Your baby should continue to drink formula or breastmilk though the amount your baby drinks will decrease as your baby eats more food. Many parents wonder how much their 9 month old should drink. You can judge if your baby is getting enough fluid by your baby's urine—it should be light yellow and not have a strong smell—and by the consistency of your baby's stools which should be soft. Offer your baby water from a cup so she can practice drinking from a cup. When your baby is one year old, she won't need a bottle if she's mastered use of a cup.

Sleep: By nine months of age many babies are taking just two naps a day—often a shorter nap in the morning and a longer nap in the afternoon. Bedtime can be difficult as your nine month old is so busy learning to do new things that he won't want to give in to tiredness on his own. You need to pick an appropriate bedtime for your baby.

Help your baby fall asleep by creating a bedtime routine for him. Nurse him or give him a bottle, and then, when he's done feeding but still awake, sing to him, rock him, read a story to him, or just be with him, as he quiets down for sleep. It's good for his teeth to wipe them off with a dampened gauze before sleep. Then put him down and allow him to fall asleep on his own.