



# BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

## 9 MONTH VISIT

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.



### HOW YOUR FAMILY IS DOING

- If you feel unsafe in your home or have been hurt by someone, let us know. Hotlines and community agencies can also provide confidential help.
- Keep in touch with friends and family.
- Invite friends over or join a parent group.
- Take time for yourself and with your partner.



### YOUR CHANGING AND DEVELOPING BABY

- Keep daily routines for your baby.
- Let your baby explore inside and outside the home. Be with her to keep her safe and feeling secure.
- Be realistic about her abilities at this age.
- Recognize that your baby is eager to interact with other people but will also be anxious when separated from you. Crying when you leave is normal. Stay calm.
- Support your baby's learning by giving her baby balls, toys that roll, blocks, and containers to play with.
- Help your baby when she needs it.
- Talk, sing, and read daily.
- Don't allow your baby to watch TV or use computers, tablets, or smartphones.
- Consider making a family media plan. It helps you make rules for media use and balance screen time with other activities, including exercise.



### DISCIPLINE

- Tell your baby in a nice way what to do ("Time to eat"), rather than what not to do.
- Be consistent.
- Use distraction at this age. Sometimes you can change what your baby is doing by offering something else such as a favorite toy.
- Do things the way you want your baby to do them—you are your baby's role model.
- Use "No!" only when your baby is going to get hurt or hurt others.



### FEEDING YOUR BABY

- Be patient with your baby as he learns to eat without help.
- Know that messy eating is normal.
- Emphasize healthy foods for your baby. Give him 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day.
- Start giving more table foods. No foods need to be withheld except for raw honey and large chunks that can cause choking.
- Vary the thickness and lumpiness of your baby's food.
- Don't give your baby soft drinks, tea, coffee, and flavored drinks.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much. Let him decide when he is full and wants to stop eating.
- Keep trying new foods. Babies may say no to a food 10 to 15 times before they try it.
- Help your baby learn to use a cup.
- Continue to breastfeed as long as you can and your baby wishes. Talk with us if you have concerns about weaning.
- Continue to offer breast milk or iron-fortified formula until 1 year of age. Don't switch to cow's milk until then.

**Helpful Resources:** National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233 | Family Media Use Plan: [www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan](http://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan)  
 Poison Help Line: 800-222-1222 | Information About Car Safety Seats: [www.safercar.gov/parents](http://www.safercar.gov/parents) | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

# 9 MONTH VISIT—PARENT



## SAFETY

- Use a rear-facing-only car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Have your baby's car safety seat rear facing until she reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car safety seat's manufacturer. In most cases, this will be well past the second birthday.
- Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag.
- Your baby's safety depends on you. Always wear your lap and shoulder seat belt. Never drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Never text or use a cell phone while driving.
- Never leave your baby alone in the car. Start habits that prevent you from ever forgetting your baby in the car, such as putting your cell phone in the back seat.
- If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Don't leave heavy or hot things on tablecloths that your baby could pull over.
- Put barriers around space heaters and keep electrical cords out of your baby's reach.
- Never leave your baby alone in or near water, even in a bath seat or ring. Be within arm's reach at all times.
- Keep poisons, medications, and cleaning supplies locked up and out of your baby's sight and reach.
- Put the Poison Help line number into all phones, including cell phones. Call if you are worried your baby has swallowed something harmful.
- Install operable window guards on windows at the second story and higher. Operable means that, in an emergency, an adult can open the window.
- Keep furniture away from windows.
- Keep your baby in a high chair or playpen when in the kitchen.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR CHILD'S 12 MONTH VISIT

### We will talk about

- Caring for your child, your family, and yourself
- Creating daily routines
- Feeding your child
- Caring for your child's teeth
- Keeping your child safe at home, outside, and in the car

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition*

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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The information contained in this handout should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Original handout included as part of the *Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit, 2nd Edition*.

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# A Guide to Children's Dental Health



The road to a bright smile begins long before the first tooth breaks through the gum. Parents play a big part in helping their children develop healthy teeth. Early monitoring by a pediatrician is important. Regular care by a dental professional, getting enough fluoride, and eating right are all steps to good dental health. By following these steps and teaching them to your children, you can help your children grow up to have healthy teeth and winning smiles.

## When do teeth start to form?

Teeth start forming under the gums even before a child is born. During pregnancy, a woman can get her child's teeth off to a healthy start by following her doctor's advice and eating a well-balanced diet. A child's first tooth generally breaks through the gum at about 5 or 6 months of age, but this can vary quite a bit. Some children already have a tooth when they are born. It may be a real tooth or an extra tooth. To find out, your pediatrician may have your child see a pediatric dentist. Other children may not get their first tooth until after 1 year of age.

## What can I expect when my child starts teething?

When teething begins, your child's gum may be swollen in the spot where a tooth is about to break through. To ease the sensation of teething, you can give infants a one-piece teething ring or pacifier to suck on. (Teething rings and pacifiers made up of more than one piece may become unattached and may cause choking.) You should never give infants pacifiers that have been dipped in sweet liquids. Sugar from such liquids stays on the teeth and provides food for bacteria that can cause tooth decay.

When they are several months old, infants begin to produce more saliva than they are able to swallow, which causes them to drool. Also at about the same age they begin to put objects in their mouths and bite or chew on them. Drooling and chewing on objects (or rubbing them against the gum) are a natural part of an infant's development and may or may not signify teething.

## Why are baby teeth important?

Baby teeth, or primary teeth, help children chew food, speak clearly, and retain space for their permanent teeth that start to come in at about 5 or 6 years of age.

It is important to get children into the habit of good dental care at an early age. Children who begin to take care of their teeth at a young age are more likely to have good dental habits as adults.

## What is fluoride and why is it important?

Your toothpaste and drinking water may have fluoride in them, but you may not know what fluoride is or why it is important. Fluoride is a natural chemical that can be added to drinking water. It strengthens enamel, the hard outer coating on teeth. Enamel production occurs before teeth break through; so even before teeth actually appear, fluoride helps prevent decay. Fluoride also helps repair

early damage to teeth. The fluoride content of local water supplies varies. Water that has low levels of fluoride can be a problem for infants who get very little fluoride from breast milk or formula. Check with your local water department to find out the exact water-fluoride level in your area. Then talk with your pediatrician to see if your child needs additional fluoride. Infants who are not getting enough fluoride should start taking additional amounts at 6 months of age. These children should continue to take additional fluoride until they are at least 16 years old.

## When should I start cleaning my child's teeth?

Daily dental cleaning should start as soon as your infant's first tooth appears. Wipe the teeth with a piece of gauze or a damp cloth. Switch to a toothbrush with a fluoride toothpaste as the child gets older. Fluoride in toothpaste absorbs into the tooth enamel and helps prevent tooth decay. Because children tend to swallow toothpaste, put only a small (pea-sized) amount of fluoride toothpaste on your child's toothbrush. Ingesting too much fluoride while brushing can result in bright white tooth staining (mottling).

Also check the teeth for early signs of decay. These appear as white, yellow, or brown spots on the teeth. Some children may develop decay in spite of the best preventive efforts. This may be because it runs in their family. Genetic influence also plays a role in a person's overall dental health.

## Does thumb sucking hurt teeth?

Thumb sucking is normal in infants and young children and should cause no permanent problems if not continued past the age of 5. Likewise, it is harmless for infants to use pacifiers. Children who suck their thumbs past the age of 5 may need a referral to a pediatric dentist to determine if problems are developing.

## Can putting children in bed with a bottle harm their teeth?

Infants put to bed with a bottle filled with milk or juice have a higher risk of developing "baby bottle tooth decay" or "nursing bottle decay." When these infants fall asleep, they can end up with a small pool of liquid in their mouths. The sugar in milk or juice creates a breeding ground for bacteria, which damage their teeth. This process may lead to severe decay. Toddlers who carry around and suck on a bottle filled with milk, juice, or other sugary liquids can also develop baby bottle tooth decay.

There are some steps parents can take to avoid baby bottle tooth decay:

- Do not put children to bed with a bottle.
- Do not use a bottle of milk or juice as a pacifier during the day. This means you should not let a child walk around with the bottle.
- Teach children to drink from a cup as soon as they are old enough to hold one. Most children can do this well before their first birthday.

## Are there other eating habits that are bad for a child's teeth?

Sweets like candy or cookies can lead to tooth decay. Starchy foods such as crackers and sticky foods such as raisins, tend to stay on the teeth long. These foods are also more likely to lead to tooth decay. Sugar from fruits and fruit juices left on the teeth for long periods of time is also not healthy for teeth. Starches and fruits, however, are a necessary part of any child's diet. To avoid tooth decay, give children these foods only at mealtime (before the teeth have been brushed), not at bedtime. For healthy teeth, offer children a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods.

## When should children be seen by a dentist?

Before the age of 3, your child's basic dental care can be handled by your pediatrician. During regular well-child visits, your pediatrician will check your child's teeth and gums to make sure they are healthy. However, if dental problems do arise, your pediatrician may refer your child to a dental professional. A pediatric dentist (pedodontist) specializes in the care of children's teeth, but some general dentists are interested in treating children's dental needs and will also see children.

Situations in which a pediatrician may wish to refer a child to a dental professional before age 3 include:

- If the child chips or injures a tooth or has an injury to the face or mouth.
- If the teeth show any signs of discoloration. This could be a sign of tooth decay.
- If a tooth is painful or is sensitive to hot or cold foods or liquids. This could also be a sign of decay.

Most mouth pain in children is not dental in origin. It could be a sign of infection. A pediatrician can rule out medical conditions that are not related to a child's dental health.

## Prevention

Children should get regular dental checkups after age 3 or when all 20 baby teeth have come in. Parents might prefer to take their children to a pediatric dentist for these regular checkups. As previously noted, some children may need earlier visits to the dentist.

Regular dental checkups, a balanced diet, fluoride, injury prevention, and brushing are all important for healthy teeth. Starting children off with good dental habits now will help them grow up with healthy smiles.

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From your doctor



## Activities for Infants 8-12 Months Old



<p>Let your baby feed himself. This gives your baby practice picking up small objects (cereal, cooked peas) and also gives him experience with textures in his hands and mouth. Soon your baby will be able to finger feed an entire meal.</p>	<p>Your baby will be interested in banging objects to make noise. Give your baby blocks to bang, rattles to shake, or wooden spoons to bang on containers. Show your baby how to bang objects together.</p>	<p>A good pastime is putting objects in and out of containers. Give your baby plastic containers with large beads or blocks. Your baby may enjoy putting socks in and out of the sock drawer or small cartons (Jell-O, tuna or soup cans) on and off shelves.</p>	<p>Mirrors are exciting at this age. Let your baby pat and poke at herself in the mirror. Smile and make faces together in the mirror.</p>	<p>Your baby will begin using his index fingers to poke. Let your baby poke at a play telephone or busy box. Your baby will want to poke at faces. Name the body parts as your baby touches your face.</p>
<p>Put toys on a sofa or sturdy table so that your baby can practice standing while playing with the toys.</p>	<p>Find a big box that your baby can crawl in and out of. Stay close by and talk to your baby about what she is doing. "You went in! Now you are out!"</p>	<p>Read baby books or colorful magazines by pointing and telling your baby what is in the picture. Let your baby pat pictures in the book.</p>	<p>Play hide-and-seek games with objects. Let your baby see you hide an object under a blanket, diaper, or pillow. If your baby doesn't uncover the object, just cover part of it. Help your baby find the object.</p>	<p>Play ball games. Roll a ball to your baby. Help your baby, or have a partner help him roll the ball back to you. Your baby may even throw the ball, so beach balls or Nerf balls are great for this game.</p>
<p>Turn on a radio or stereo. Hold your baby in a standing position and let your baby bounce and dance. If your baby can stand with a little support, hold her hands and dance like partners.</p>	<p>Play imitation games like Peek-a-boo and So Big. Show pleasure at your baby's imitations of movements and sounds. Babies enjoy playing the same games over and over.</p>	<p>Let your baby play with plastic measuring cups, cups with handles, sieves and strainers, sponges, and balls that float in the bathtub. Bath time is a great learning time.</p>	<p>Play Pat-a-Cake with your baby. Clap his hands together or take turns. Wait and see if your baby signals you to start the game again. Try the game using blocks or spoons to clap and bang with.</p>	<p>Your baby will play more with different sounds like "la-la" and "da-da." Copy the sounds your baby makes. Add a new one and see if your baby tries it, too. Enjoy your baby's early attempts at talking.</p>
<p>Make a simple puzzle for your baby by putting blocks or Ping-Pong balls inside a muffin pan or egg carton.</p>	<p>You can make a simple toy by cutting a round hole in the plastic lid of a coffee can. Give your baby wooden clothes pins or Ping-Pong balls to drop inside.</p>	<p>Say "hi" and wave when entering a room with your baby. Encourage your baby to imitate. Help your baby wave to greet others. Waving "hi" and "bye" are early gestures.</p>	<p>Let your baby make choices. Offer two toys or foods and see which one your baby picks. Encourage your baby to reach or point to the chosen object. Babies have definite likes and dislikes!</p>	<p>New places and people are good experiences for your baby, but these can be frightening. Let your baby watch and listen and move at her own speed. Go slowly. Your baby will tell you when she is ready for more.</p>

# 6 to 12 Months



## 6 TO 12 MONTHS

### Safety for Your Child

Did you know that hundreds of children younger than 1 year die every year in the United States because of injuries — most of which can be prevented?

Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do. Your child is a fast learner and will suddenly be able to *roll over*, *crawl*, *sit*, and *stand*. Your child may *climb* before walking, or *walk* with support months before you expect. Your child will *grasp* at almost anything and reach things he or she could not reach before.

#### Falls

Because of your child's new abilities, he or she will fall often. Protect your child from injury. **Use gates on stairways and doors. Install operable window guards** on all windows above the first floor. **Remove sharp-edged or hard furniture** from the room where your child plays.

**Do not use a baby walker.** Your child may tip it over, fall out of it, or fall down the stairs in it. Baby walkers allow children to get to places where they can pull hot foods or heavy objects down on themselves.

**If your child has a serious fall or does not act normally after a fall, call your doctor.**

#### Burns

At 6 to 12 months children grab at everything. **NEVER** leave cups of hot coffee on tables or counter edges. **And NEVER carry hot liquids or food near your child or while holding your child.** He or she could get burned. Also, if your child is left to crawl or walk around stoves, wall or floor heaters, or other hot appliances, he or she is likely to get burned. **A safer place for your child** while you are cooking, eating, or unable to provide your full attention is the **playpen, crib, or stationary activity center, or buckled into a high chair.**

**If your child does get burned, put cold water on the burned area immediately. Keep the burned area in cold water for a few minutes to cool it off. Then cover the burn loosely with a dry bandage or clean cloth. Call your doctor for all burns. To protect your child from tap water scalds, the hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F. In many cases you can adjust your water heater.**

Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, especially in furnace and sleeping areas. Test the alarms every month. It is best to use smoke alarms that use long-life batteries, but if you do not, change the batteries at least once a year.



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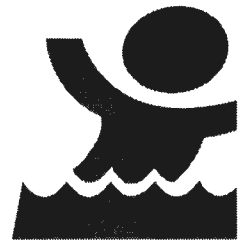
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## Drowning

At this age your child loves to play in water. Empty all the water from a bathtub, pail, or any container of water immediately after use. Keep the door to the bathroom closed. **NEVER leave your child alone in or near a bathtub, pail of water, wading or swimming pool, or any other water, even for a moment.** Drowning can happen in less than 2 inches of water. Knowing how to swim does NOT mean your child is safe in or near water. Stay within an arm's length of your child around water.

If you have a swimming pool, now is the time to **install a fence** that separates the house from the pool. The pool should be fenced in on all 4 sides. Most children drown when they wander out of the house and fall into a pool that is not fenced off from the house. Be prepared — install a fence around your pool now, before your child begins to walk!



## Poisoning and Choking

Your child will explore the world by *putting anything and everything into his or her mouth*. NEVER leave small objects or balloons in your child's reach, even for a moment. Don't feed your child hard pieces of food such as hot dogs, raw carrots, grapes, peanuts, or popcorn. Cut all of his or her food into thin slices to prevent choking.

**Be prepared if your child starts to choke. Learn how to save the life of a choking child. Ask your doctor to recommend the steps you need to take.**

Children will put everything into their mouths, even if it doesn't taste good. Many ordinary things in your house **can be poisonous** to your child. Be sure to keep household products such as cleaners, chemicals, and medicines up, up, and away, completely out of sight and reach. Never store lye drain cleaners in your home. **Use safety latches or locks** on drawers and cupboards. Remember, your child doesn't understand or remember "no" while exploring.



**If your child does eat something that could be poisonous, call the Poison Help number at 1-800-222-1222 immediately. Do not make your child vomit.**

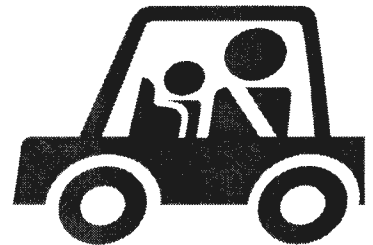
## Strangulation and Suffocation

Place your baby's crib away from windows. **Cords from window blinds and draperies can strangle your child.** Use cordless window coverings, or if this is not possible, tie cords high and out of reach. Do not knot cords together.

**Plastic wrappers and bags** form a tight seal if placed over the mouth and nose and may suffocate your child. Keep them away from your child.

## And Remember Car Safety

**Car crashes** are a **great danger** to your child's life and health. Most injuries and deaths caused by car crashes **can be prevented** by the use of car safety seats EVERY TIME your child is in the car. All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat until they are at least 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer. A rear-facing car safety seat should NEVER be placed in front of a passenger air bag. Your child, besides being much safer in a car safety seat, will behave better so you can pay attention



to your driving. **The safest place for all infants and children to ride is in the back seat.**

**Do not leave your child alone in a car. Keep vehicles and their trunks locked. Children who are left in a car can die of heat stroke because temperatures can reach deadly levels in minutes.**

**Remember, the biggest threat to your child's life and health is an injury.**

From Your Doctor

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