

INFANCY – 6 MONTHS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury and illness prevention

Get down on the floor and check for hazards at baby's eye level.

Continue to use an infant car seat that is properly secured at all times.

Continue to test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not hot before bathing the baby.

Never leave the baby alone or with a young sibling or pet.

Do not leave her alone in a tub of water or on high places such as changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. Always keep one hand on the baby.

Empty buckets, tubs or small pools immediately after use. Ensure that swimming pools have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.

Continue to keep the baby's environment free of smoke. Keep the home and car nonsmoking zones.

Do not drink hot liquids or smoke while holding the baby.

Avoid overexposure to the sun.

Do not leave heavy objects or containers of hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that the baby may pull down.

Place plastic plugs in electrical sockets.

Keep toys with small parts or other small or sharp objects out of reach.

Keep sharp objects (e.g. scissors, knives) out of reach.

Keep all poisonous substances, medicines, cleaning agents, health and beauty aids, paints, and paint solvents locked in a safe place out of the baby's sight and reach. Never store poisonous substances in empty jars or soda bottles.

Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Do not give the infant plastic bags, latex balloons, or small objects such as marbles.

Install safety devices on drawers and cabinets where the infant may play.

Install gates at the top and bottom of stairs, and place safety devices on windows.

Lower the crib mattress.

Avoid dangling electrical and drapery cords.

Keep pet food and dishes out of reach. Do not permit the baby to approach the dog while the dog is eating.

Do not use an infant walker at any age.

Learn first aid and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Recognize early signs of illness:

Fever

Failure to eat

Vomiting

Diarrhea

Dehydration

Unusual irritability, lethargy

Petechiae

Cough

Seizure

Reaction to immunization

Nutrition

Continue to breastfeed or use iron-fortified formula for the first year of the infant's life. This milk will continue to be her major source of nutrition.

Introduce solid foods. Use a spoon to give the infant an iron-fortified, single-grain cereal such as rice. If there is no adverse reaction, add a new pureed food to the diet each week, starting with fruits and vegetables and then meats. Let the infant indicate when and how much she wants to eat.

Avoid giving the infant foods that may be aspirated or cause choking (e.g., peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs or sausages, carrot sticks, celery sticks, whole grapes, raisins, corn, and whole beans, hard candy, large pieces of raw vegetables or fruit, tough meat).

Always supervise the infant while she is eating. Learn emergency procedures for choking.

Serve solid food two or three times per day.

Begin to offer a cup for water or juice.

Limit juice to four to six ounces per day.

Give iron supplements to infants who are exclusively breastfeeding.

Continue to give the breastfeeding infant 400 I.U.s of vitamin D daily if she is deeply pigmented or does not receive enough sunlight.

Do not give the infant honey until after her first birthday to prevent infant botulism.

Ensure that your caregiver is feeding the infant appropriately.

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Oral health

To protect the infant's teeth, do not put her to bed with a bottle or prop it in her mouth.

Clean the infant's teeth with a soft brush, beginning with the eruption of her first tooth.

Give the infant fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the infant's drinking water.

Promotion of parent-infant interaction that is mutually enjoyable and satisfying

Encourage the baby's vocalizations. Talk to her during dressing, bathing, feeding, playing, walking, and driving.

Read to the baby. Play music.

Play social games such as pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, so-big.

Provide opportunities for exploration.

To set limits and discipline the infant at this age, use distraction, stimulus control, proximal physical presence, structure, and routines. Limit the number of rules and consistently enforce them.

Establish a bedtime routine and other habits to discourage night awakening.

Encourage the baby to learn to console herself by putting her to bed awake.

Consistently provide the baby with the same transitional object - such as a stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite toy - so that she can console herself at bedtime or in new situations.

Encourage play with age-appropriate toys.

Discuss with the health professional any problems your child is having with separation anxiety.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

Keep in contact with friends and family members. Avoid social isolation.

Continue to meet the needs of other children in the family, appropriately engaging them in the care of the baby.

Discuss with the health professional your child care arrangements and working hours. Also talk about availability of time for close interaction with the infant and about fatigue.

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g. WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider attending parent-child play groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations or resources.