

## 8-12 Month Old Well Visit

As your baby becomes more independent and mobile, your questions may have more to do with bumps, bruises and behavior than with anything else. Be consistent – but loving – while teaching the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

You can't protect your baby from every knee-bump suffered while learning to walk. But you can make sure poisons and medicines are kept where she can't get to them and provide a safe environment for exploration.

### When will we see the doctor?

Doctors often have their own schedules for well-baby visits, but during this stage expect visits at 9 months and again at 12 months.

If you have missed any immunizations, or if a problem has been detected that needs special attention, additional visits may be scheduled.

### What to expect during the office visit

- Measurement of your baby's length, weight and head circumference. Growth will be plotted on his growth chart, and you will be advised of his progress.
- A physical examination of the eyes, ears, heart, abdomen, hands and feet, reflexes, etc. The doctor may check the soft spot (the fontanel), which may be closed or much smaller (the size of a fingertip). The doctor will also check for new teeth and signs of others to come.
- A review of physical and emotional development through both observation and your report: Can your baby sit up alone? Pull himself up on things to a stand? Recognize his name and names of family members? Enjoy games like "peekaboo?" Your doctor may ask you these questions and others.
- You may be asked how you're doing with your baby and how the rest of the family is functioning. Your doctor may review safety with you: Have you baby proofed your home? Is your baby in an appropriate car seat while riding in the car?
- A discussion of eating habits: Is your baby eating more table foods? Interested in finger foods? Able to use a cup? Being weaned from the breast or bottle? Most doctors advise a switch from bottle to cup by the first

birthday to prevent interference with normal tooth development and to avoid struggles with a determined toddler later.

- By age 1 year, most babies can be given foods that were off-limits before, such as cow's milk, citrus fruits and eggs. Your doctor can discuss this with you.
- Advice on what to expect in the coming months.

Depending on where they live and the potential risk of tuberculosis, babies at about 1 year undergo a tuberculin skin test. You'll be given instructions on how to monitor the test and when to return to the office to check test results. Discuss possible vaccine reactions and when to call with unusual problems.

Raise any questions or concerns and jot down instructions from the doctor. Keep updating your child's medical record, listing information on growth and any problems or illnesses.

### Immunizations

If your baby missed immunizations at previous visits, he will probably be brought up-to-date now.

Immunization schedules can vary from office to office and depend on what combined vaccines your doctor uses.

### When to call the doctor

Call with questions and concerns that can't wait until the next scheduled visit. If they can wait, write them down so you don't forget.

Call the doctor right away if your baby seems especially sluggish, is refusing food or drink, is vomiting or has diarrhea, or has a temperature of 102.2°F (39°C) or higher.

Contact your doctor if you suspect your child is not developing normally. Kids have their own timetable for crawling, talking and walking, so keep that in mind when checking for these signs of developmental progress by the first birthday.

Make sure your child:

- has said a first single word (mama, dada)
- uses gestures (waves bye-bye, shakes head no)
- responds to familiar pictures or toys
- stands when supported and pulls up on things to stand

Again, the absence of any of these signs may or may not be cause for concern. Share them with your doctor, though, because problems caught early can be treated more successfully.

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