

Your Child at Twelve Months

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DEVELOPMENT:

All babies develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice your baby:

- Says one or more meaningful words or sounds
- Copysounds
- Points to objects that he or she wants
- Follows simple directions
- Picks up small objects precisely with thumb and forefinger
- Places objects inside each other
- Looks for objects hidden from view
- Takes steps while holding on to furniture or takes steps alone with legs wide apart

IMUNIZATIONS: Chickenpox (varicella) and MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). Pneumococcal conjugate may be given at this visit if the visit falls within the winter months.

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- Fever
- More irritability or fussiness
- Redness or swelling at the site of the shot.
- Rash

If needed, you can give your baby acetaminophen (Tylenol). Ask your Provider for the correct dose. Contact your Provider if your child's symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

NOTE: There is a slight risk of fever or rash seven to 12 days after your child is vaccinated. This shouldn't be something to be concerned about for your child. But, if a fever or rash does develop, your child should not be around other people with a significantly weakened immune system.

Next visit: Age 15 or 18 months

- LABS: Your child may need to be tested for anemia, lead poisoning or tuberculosis. Talk with your Provider.

NUTRITION:

- Keep breast-feeding as much you can and for as long as you and your child want.
- You can now replace formula with whole cow's milk—16 to 24 ounces a day is enough.
- Have your child drink from a cup instead of a bottle when possible.
- Babies at this age do not need juice. If you choose to give juice to your child, limit the amount to no more than four ounces a day.
- Have your child use a spoon and feed himself or herself—even if it is messy.
- Let your child eat more finger foods such as cut fresh fruit, Cheerios, pieces of whole grain bread or infant crackers. Do not give your child foods that he or she can choke on such as nuts, raisins, popcorn, hard candy or hot dogs cut into round pieces.
- Most children can now have honey, eggs, fish, shellfish and foods that contain nuts. But if your child has had food allergies, eczema or if there is family history of allergies, your Provider may want your child to avoid some of those foods for a longer time. Talk with your Provider.
- Keep giving your child vitamin D and/or fluoride supplements as your Provider suggests.
- This is a common time for food struggles to arise. It is your job to give your child healthy foods, and it is your child's job to decide how much to eat. The amount of food your child eats can vary from day to day. Do not force your child to clean his or her plate. It is normal for weight gain to slow this year so your child may eat less than before. Trust that your child knows when he or she is hungry and full. Do not let your child watch TV during mealtimes.

SAFETY

- Avoid foods that may cause your child to choke. Children choke on foods that are round, small and hard such as peanuts, popcorn, raw carrots, whole grapes and hot dogs cut into pieces.
- Falls are more common as children learn to walk. Install gates and window guards. Remove furniture with sharp edges and corners.
- Remove hazardous items such as pins, coins, medications and plants from your child's reach.
- The kitchen is a dangerous room. Keep knives out of reach. Cook on the back burners of your stove to reduce the risk of burns.
- Cover outlets, secure electrical cords and make sure blind cords are out of reach.
- Watch your child at all times when he or she is near pools, hot tubs, toilets and buckets. Children can drown in as little as two inches of water.
- Before your baby begins to stand, lower the crib mattress to the lowest position and remove the bumpers.
- Avoid keeping your child in the sun for long times. When outdoors put a hat on your child and apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30.
- Always place your baby in a car seat that faces backward in the back seat. For more information, go the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site: nhtsa.gov.
- Make sure that the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, please speak with your Provider or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or ndvh.org.
- Post the Poison Control Hotline on your refrigerator: 1-800-222-1222.

SLEEP

Objects such as a small blanket may still comfort your child, especially if he or she becomes anxious when you leave. Night feedings end around this age. If your child cries at night, respond right away and comfort him or her, but do not rock your baby for a long time, feed or bring your baby to bed. This can create habits that are hard to break. If you are concerned about your child's sleep habits, talk with your Provider.

DISCIPLINE

Because your child is moving around more and is exploring, you need to start setting limits. Distracting your child and removing objects he or she shouldn't touch are good tools at this age. However, it is not too early to start telling your child "no". Say "no" to dangerous acts such as reaching up to the stove, or acts such as hitting or biting. Make sure that all caregivers follow the same set of rules. They should be consistent in disciplining your child. Never spank your child.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

- Postpartum depression can happen at any time during the first year.

While postpartum blues are common during the first few weeks, they usually get better. If moms feel sad, anxious or depressed beyond this time, they should seek help and talk with their Provider. You can find more information online at postpartum.net.

- Separation anxiety may start at this time. Your child may have let you leave for work without being upset before but may now start to cry or cling to you. Know that this is a stage many children go through and your child will be fine after you leave. Try not to sneak out of the house without your child seeing you—this can make your child more anxious and clingy.
- Try to find time for you and your partner to be alone. Taking care of yourselves will allow you to take better care of your family.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

- Playing with toys that roll and blocks that your child can dump out of a container and stack help teach cause and effect.
- Listen to and make music with your child. Songs with gestures and finger actions teach your child how to copy.
- Play interactive games. Laugh with your child and encourage older brothers and sisters to join in playtime.
- Walkers are dangerous and not needed. Do not use them. Children learn to walk on their own. Barefoot is best. Your child does not need special shoes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org; American Academy of Family Physicians: aafp.org; Immunization information: immunize.org, cdc.gov/vaccines, vaccine.chop.edu, familyProvider.org and vaccineinformation.org
- Suggested reading:
 - *Baby Proofing Basics* by Vicky Lansky
 - *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age Five* by American Academy of Pediatrics, Stephen Shelov, M.D.
 - *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense* by Ellyn Satter
 - *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Marc Weissbluth
 - *Mommy Calls: Dr. Tanya Answers Parents' Top 101 Questions About Babies and Toddlers* by Tanya Remer Altmann, M.D.
 - *Oneness and Separateness: From Infant to Individual* by Louise Kaplan, Ph.D.
 - *Touchpoints: Birth to 3: Your Child's Behavioral and Emotional Development* by Barry Brazelton, M.D., and Joshua Sparrow, M.D.
- Other books are available at aap.org/bookstore.