

# SIX MONTHS OUR LITTLE SUNSHINE

**SHOTS:** today should be some repeat boosters. Each time the baby gets the booster they develop a little more immunity so your baby might have a little more redness. Usually Tylenol or Advil will take care of that. Prevnar and Pentacel are the usual shots today.

**MOTHERS** have no PERFECT WAY to parent! No doubt you have been initiated into that secret. Remember your baby watches you! So, spend as much time as possible with your baby! Wear the baby with a carrier on front or back, your baby will learn from you. They also watch how you talk to others and how you show your feelings. Even though they don't understand the words they certainly understand when you're angry or upset so try to just say what you feel out loud. Always realize the baby's fragility... they cannot be spanked or slapped at this age.

**DADS** make an awesome impression on their children by bonding right now. [Moms: dad isn't perfect either]. The two of you must negotiate on how to raise your child. Be honest, but give the other parent a little freedom. Grandparents also have ideas that we can value as a tradition, but ultimately the buck stops at mom and dad.

We expect dads to play and feed and change the baby's diaper and even put the baby down to sleep. Look for ways to help. Try to carve out some special time each day with your baby to show them that they are important. When dads take care of the children they are also ministering to and cherishing mom. Building a family takes a lot of work and sacrifice. Lack of sleep during the early months can make both of you irritable and unkind. Critical spirits can destroy relationships, so remember the three A's: appreciation, attention and activity.

**SLEEPING:** It is still very important to nap when your baby naps if you are able. Your baby might experiment with waking up at night. It might even happen if your baby was sleeping all the way through the night for a while. The baby might want to play or not feel well, or just trying something new. You can leave the baby alone for a few minutes to see if they will get themselves back to sleep. If not come into the room comfort the baby but try not to pick them up and tell them it's time to go to sleep. Then leave. If after 15 minutes your baby is still crying, you can repeat your reassurance. If baby is not good at flipping



over, continue to keep baby on their back and keep the crib free of smothering hazards.

**FLAT HEADS:** Plagiocephaly is a problem that exploded when babies were put on their backs (to avoid most SIDS deaths). It is related to babies not moving around enough and once a flat spot develops it tends to get reinforced until baby is older and moving around more. Most kids can be treated with more stimulation and intentional repositioning. Discuss it with us.

**DEVELOPMENT:** This is a fun time with babbling and creeping and crawling around with a little sitting and standing holding on to you. Encourage exploration and make sure it's safe. Your baby doesn't know right from wrong. Removing them from situations that are harmful and reinforce (especially good) behaviors with words. Play peek-a-boo, play music. Too often a baby in church is left alone while nice and quiet, but as soon as they start acting up the parent gives them more attention... it is wiser to give them plenty of strokes and touches while they are quiet to reinforce the good.

When you are warm and loving with your baby, trust will develop naturally and your baby will want to please you and accept your limits. When a baby starts to go toward a stairway pick them up and move them to a safe spot and say, "play over here." That is called redirecting. If you ignore behaviors that don't harm a baby like spitting food out, you will notice those behaviors will go away more quickly. Remember: don't make any eye contact or smile or yell or laugh when "ignoring" behavior you hope doesn't repeat itself. Babies develop by mimicking other kids, so try to connect with other parents for a play date. This is a great time age to observe babies playing. It

always amazes me how patient children are with other children and how much attention another child will give a baby. Do supervise carefully especially with pets.

#### SEPARATION ANXIETY Develops

while peek-a-boo is becoming fun.

Baby does realize you are uniquely you, but has not yet developed the concept (object permanence) that you are going to be there if out of sight.

Make your best attempts to spoil your baby with time and attention now and the security you nurture will last a lifetime. If in earshot, talk to your baby or sing. If leaving (with grandma, daycare) make a goodbye ritual. Always say the same thing with love and calm, end with a wave.

**STOOL:** Don't stick anything up your baby's bottom. Pooping is one thing your baby has control of and will be more of a problem if you get over involved. A new formula or food, or too much chaos at normal pooping time might be interfering. Try giving grape or prune juice (2 ounces with an ounce of water) once daily.

**DIAPER RASH:** Even with good preventive measures a new food might irritate your baby's bottom. Try to avoid the thick "butt" creams since skin is so gentle at this age it is traumatic to remove. Use wipes or even washcloths with a gentle touch while removing a messy stool. Rinse with water if you are using soap. Domeboro solution works nicely after any diaper change as an astringent. Ask for our skin care handout or see it on our website. A little baby powder after gentle patting dry helps.

**FEEDING:** Food glorious food, we're anxious to wear it! Some babies don't understand that solid food properly swallowed down also satisfies their hunger. It may take a month for your baby to get the concept of eating solids. Always offer it while your baby is hungry before formula or a bottle. One food spurned today may be taken with gusto tomorrow. Keep experimenting with different foods. We typically start with grains, vegetables and later: fruits... If you do make your own food make sure it's small enough that your baby cannot choke on it. Jar food is convenient and if you read labels and there are no bad additives that is ok to use. Don't put food back in a jar, just dish out what is needed. Some babies eat table food this early, like peas and bananas and peaches and watermelon, just be sure pieces are small enough or mashed up that there is minimal risk for choking. Remember: start foods one at a time for a few days in case of constipation or diarrhea or a rash.

Avoid sweets or fruit roll-ups or prepared finger foods that have too many weird ingredients. Reading labels you'll see things like high fructose corn syrup, which we encourage you to avoid like the plague. That means avoiding soda and most juices. Real fruit juices are fine if they don't have those additives. Make sure eating time is a happy and relaxed family time and always be attentive to your baby while they are eating. Avoid using the bottle as a constant pacifier.

**TEETHING:** may begin and chewing on lots of items will be the norm with drooling! Homeopathic products are out there; some swear amber necklaces help. Cool items help but every baby will have their favorite way to get through this. It is truly painful so you might try a little Tylenol prior to a nap or even if eating is tough. Nursing caries is the tooth decay caused by going to bed with a bottle. If a bottle goes in the crib with them, it must have only water in it, no milk or juice.

**ALLERGIES:** Please consult us prior to making any big changes in baby's diet. Too many expensive and highly processed diet items are direct-marketed to parents. We may be able to find holistic solutions for your problem.

**SAFETY:** Lots of things can be swallowed quickly like balloons, plastic bags; even baby wipes can choke a baby. Be careful that your baby can't reach a hot drink or a pot on the stove. Cleaning products should be moved up to higher cabinets as babies quickly learn how to open even the best locks. Also, remove things within reach that can be broken because babies love to take things off shelves. A safety gate should prevent the baby from going down a stairway. Receptacle covers are okay, but better than cabinet locks is harmony in the home. A happy home is a safe home. Still your attentiveness is required to keep baby from chewing on cords and you will be redirecting your baby often at this age.

**DOCTOR:** Charting growth and knowing the baby's growth percentage is fun, though for the most part it is still based on in-utero (mom's) nutrition. After 18 months we will have a better idea of the growth curve your baby will follow.

**NEXT VISIT:** is between 8-9 months of age. TSG/TRG 2017

CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED ...

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