

# mmpc pediatrics

## 9 MONTH CHECK

Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_ Head Circumference \_\_\_\_\_

You now have a very busy baby on your hands! Now that she is mobile, a whole new world is opened to her. Keeping her safe in her environment is a full time job.

### Development:

Your baby is sitting well at this point and is rolling both ways with ease. He will be using his hands more to explore objects including shaking, banging, and throwing them. He will also develop a pincer grasp with his thumb and pointer finger, making any teeny tiny object on the floor fair game. He will be able to learn some simple games now like peek-a-boo, "so big", wave bye-bye, and patty cake. He will start babbling sounds like mama or dada or baba. Most babies are crawling at this point, or have found another way to get around that work for them. He may be able to pull up to standing and cruise along furniture. Avoid walkers as they are very dangerous and may actually delay walking at this point. You will not need shoes for standing and walking at this age as feet develop best without the restriction of shoes. For protection outdoors, choose a shoe with a flexible sole or slippers. (You do not need to spend a lot of money on shoes he will outgrow in 8 weeks.)

### Feedings:

Breast milk or formula is still a good source of nutrition for him, but as he takes more solid foods, the breast milk or formula is a bit less important. We expect that babies at this age will gradually take less breast milk or formula and more solids, either pureed or table foods. A good ballpark goal for a 9 month old infant is a maximum of 24 ounces of breast milk or formula during a 24 hour period in addition to whatever solids they take in.

If your baby has tolerated pureed baby foods well, and has worked into the chunkier number 3 foods, he is ready to try a bit of your food (table foods). This is not something you need to push, but can be left up to your baby's tastes and interests. The speed of this transition does not matter. Go as slowly as you feel comfortable. You might start with soft foods like mashed potatoes, applesauce, mashed bananas, or avocado and progress to graham crackers, cheerios, waffles, pastas and breads. You can also try dairy products such as yogurt or cheese, meats (start with small pieces of turkey or chicken) or soft cooked vegetables like carrots or peas. Assume he won't chew food until 15 months or later, so cut up the food well, and make sure it is soft and dissolvable. At this point, there are only a few foods to avoid including honey, peanuts, or peanut containing foods (watch out for peanut oil as an ingredient) or other nuts, and egg whites. Avoid choking hazards as well such as raisins, hard raw vegetables or fruits, popcorn etc. We recommend waiting until age 1 before switching from formula to cow's milk. Continue to offer water in the sippy cup at meals and let her take as much as she wishes.

And don't worry....you cannot mess this up. If you are feeling stressed about feedings it is because you have preconceived ideas of how quickly she should be progressing, and there are no real rules here (other than those few foods you should avoid).

### Sleep:

At this age, many babies will go through periods when they will wake up at night, even if they were previously sleeping through with ease. There are several possible reasons for this. She may be going through a developmental spurt where she is learning a new skill (such as babbling or crawling) and this may make her sleep less organized. This may last for a few weeks then resolve spontaneously. She may also be going through some separation anxiety, where upon awakening, she realizes you are not there. Try going to her for reassurance, then ease her back down to sleep. She might also learn to pull to stand but cannot yet get back down. You will need to teach her to bend her knees to get back down, and with repetition, she'll get the hang of this. Any waking that persists at this age, especially if awakening at the same time each night, will require that you let her cry back to sleep to break the cycle. This may be difficult, but you are teaching her good sleep habits by enabling her to fall asleep without your help.

### Anxiety:

At nine months, many babies are at the peak of separation and stranger anxiety (though this can vary from 4 months to 2 years). This is a very normal stage in development and you may refer to the previous handout at 6 months for additional information.

**Behavior:**

Naturally, as your baby gets more mobile, he will be getting into many things, including things you may not want him to! Try to avoid saying “no” as this quickly becomes a game which you cannot really win. Many well-meaning parents try to use what they believe is discipline at this age in an attempt to instill a sense of “right and wrong”. Discipline actually means “to teach” and at this age, you teach more by your actions (or more often, lack of action) than you do with your words. We are all strong believers in teaching children limit-setting, self-discipline, and consequences for actions, but most of this teaching is achieved later when their language and reasoning skills are more advanced.

Ignoring behaviors and distraction are your 2 best plans at this age. Start by making your house as baby-proofed as possible and let her explore her environment. She will briefly explore, then look back at you for reassurance. Give her positive attention (smile, kind words, touch) as she learns to explore. When she explores things you may wish her not to (but are not dangerous), just ignore her. Without reinforcement she will move onto something else.

Distraction or redirection work well when the behavior cannot be ignored. You may try exchanging an object for the one you do not wish she play with, or you may have to entice her by playing with the preferred toy yourself, showing her that your toy is much more fun than what she may be playing with. The key to good distraction is be creative, since she may not fall for the same distraction more than a few times.