

West Plano Pediatrics
6300 W. Parker Rd #426, Plano, TX 75093
(972) 608-0774

Six Month Check-up Advice
Next Visit: Nine Months

Diet--If your baby has not started eating solids yet, it's time to start. You can continue adding individual foods to your baby's diet every 4-5 days. Once he has had each individual food in a combination dinner, it is okay to give the combination. You may start giving your baby strained meats, or finely chopped, mildly flavored meats that you have prepared for the rest of your family. If you are still breastfeeding and he is sitting steadily on his own, you can offer him expressed breast milk or formula in a cup. How long you decide to continue breastfeeding your baby is up to you and your baby. Some mothers want to wean their babies at this age or earlier because they are returning to work. Even if you want to continue to give your baby only breast milk, it is important to introduce your baby to drinking from a cup so it will become a part of his routine and he will be able to wean more easily when you are ready. If your child is breastfeeding, then a supplement containing Vitamin D and iron is recommended. Polyvisol – 1 dropper daily will meet this need.

Development--Your baby is probably beginning to roll over both ways, and may be learning to sit by himself. He is starting to babble some, using the same sound over and over (bababa, mamama, etc.). He will start using the sounds that he makes to get your attention and to express his feelings. Good toys at this age are pop-ups, squeak toys and plastic cups, spoons, etc. Keep talking to him, reading aloud, playing and teaching him new games.

Separation Anxiety--At this age, your baby is beginning to remember objects and people even when he can't see them. This developmental milestone is called "object permanence". He may be endlessly fascinated with "peek-a-boo" games. Separation anxiety occurs when he recalls his parent but she is not around. At this age, he doesn't yet know that she will return. Your baby needs to be reassured that you will be back. You should have a fairly set routine when you are preparing to leave and be sure to reassure him that you are coming back. At first, the routine may make your child anxious as you are preparing to leave him, but if you continue your routine, he will begin to anticipate your return and separation will be easier. Never sneak out or leave after he has fallen asleep. Remember that separation anxiety is a sign that your child has formed an attachment to his parents and is a normal stage of development.

Stranger anxiety is similar to separation anxiety and usually has a peak at around 8 months and a second peak at around 18 months. Babies develop a system of communicating with their parents. At this age, he is learning that he cannot communicate in the same way with other people (strangers). Help to ease his stranger anxiety by introducing a larger group of caretakers--include extended family or friends or a sitter that he becomes familiar with. Introduce new people to him while you are holding him. Don't force him to be loving and affectionate to unfamiliar people. If at all possible, try to avoid changes in custody from 6-18 months of age.

Sleep problems are common at this age and often are a result of separation anxiety. Your baby may awaken in the middle of the night and realize that you are not in the room. At this age, he needs to be reassured that you are available to him if he needs you. Go into his room and talk quietly to him or hold him until he settles back down. As always, let him fall back to sleep in his crib.

Transitional objects--Your baby may have a favorite stuffed toy or blanket that he can use to comfort himself when you are not with him. This is very normal and in fact is a sign that your child is learning to cope with his parents' absence. Some babies will be helped by a transitional object at 7-8 months, but most babies don't use this coping skill until 1-2 years old.

Teething-- Teething usually begins around 6-8 months. Babies may have some discomfort, increased drooling and chewing. Let your baby chew on a teething ring or a frozen bagel or waffle. Don't use any numbing medicines on his gums. Clean his teeth every day with a cloth or soft brush without toothpaste. A low grade temperature may go along with teething, but anything over 101° is probably due to illness.

Safety--Your child will soon become mobile by crawling, scooting or cruising, so it is time for you to begin child-proofing your house. Put all chemicals, detergents, medications, cosmetics, etc. out of your baby's reach. Put covers over all electrical outlets and move cords out of his reach. You should put baby-proof latches on all of your cabinets in the kitchen or bathroom. Get on your hands and knees and look at your house from your baby's perspective. This may help you to spot potential hazards.

Some parents like to introduce their babies to water activities early through a "water babies" program. Although these classes may be a fun activity, it is important to remember that they are not swimming lessons--they will not make it safe to leave your child alone near water. If you haven't already, put a fence around your pool with bars no further apart than 2 3/8 inches. This fence is in addition to the fence around your back yard, and should not be attached to the house on any walls containing a window or door.