

## Development at 9 Months: What Your Baby Can Do



### Highlights

By 9 months, your baby may begin eating finger foods and may be able to sit confidently.

Your baby may start showing signs of separation anxiety and may become more attached to you.

Language development continues, with your baby beginning to babble and recognize their name.

Ensure you provide a variety of foods from all five food groups and offer safe opportunities for exploration.

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### What are the milestones for my 9-month-old?

At around 9 months, your baby's brain will experience a growth spurt, and their

personality will begin to emerge more clearly. As their memory improves, they may start forming stronger attachments to certain people, showing preferences and even signs of separation anxiety when you leave.

By now, your baby should be able to handle finger foods and eat them independently. Ensure that you offer a variety of foods from the five food groups: vegetables, fruit, lean meats, fish, poultry, meat alternatives, grains, and dairy or dairy alternatives.

You can start offering food before milk feeds to help gradually reduce their milk intake.

Your baby may also begin standing upright and moving around while holding onto furniture (known as 'cruising'). However, this may take a few more months to fully develop. You don't need shoes at this stage-bare feet are best to help strengthen their feet and leg muscles. Consider shoes once they start walking outside.

## **How can I support my baby's development?**

### Physical development

By 9 months, many babies are mobile, with some even able to climb stairs. Be cautious, as coming down can be more difficult. Your baby should be able to sit confidently, lean forward, and straighten up without toppling over. They will also begin learning to bend their knees to sit down after standing.

### Cognitive development

Your baby will enjoy games like passing toys back and forth. They will also enjoy activities like putting objects in and out of containers, stacking rings, and playing with toys that have levers, doors, and moving parts.

### Social development

Separation anxiety is common at this age. Your baby may become upset when separated from you or cling to you when you try to leave. Over time, they will learn to trust other caregivers and understand that you will always come back.

## Emotional development

Your baby will feel most comfortable when you are around and may become stressed or anxious when you're not present. They will explore and play when you are nearby but will return to you for reassurance.

## Language development

By 9 months, your baby will begin to understand the meaning of words. If you point at something, they may look at it. Your baby will be babbling, copying sounds, making noises to get your attention, and may even stop when you say "no." By now, they will likely recognize their name.

## Signs of developmental concerns

Babies develop at different rates, but at 9 months, talk to your doctor or child health nurse if your baby:

Hasn't started to move or holds their body stiffly instead of sitting.

Shows no interest in or does not reach for objects.

Doesn't recognize you or a main caregiver, or doesn't make eye contact.

Doesn't turn towards quiet sounds.

Isn't babbling or recognizing sounds made by others.

Can't be comforted by you or a main caregiver.

## Tools and Assistance

If you are worried or would like to discuss any issues with your baby's development, the following resources can be helpful:

**Pediatricians:** They can assess your baby's growth and development and offer guidance.

**Child health nurses:** They provide support, tracking development milestones, and addressing any concerns.

**Parenting groups:** Connecting with others can help alleviate any worries and offer a sense of community.

**Speech therapists:** If you have concerns about your baby's language development,

speech therapists can help.

Occupational therapists: If you notice any delays in motor skills, they can assist with improving coordination.

Nutritionists: For guidance on feeding and helping your baby develop healthy eating habits, consult with a nutritionist.

Remember, it's important to speak to a healthcare professional if you have any concerns about your baby's progress.