

TWELVE MONTH OLD CHECK-UP

FEEDING AND NUTRITION

By now you should begin to wean your baby off the bottle and begin relying on a cup for his fluids. Most babies will make the transition without difficulty.

Your baby is now pretty much on table foods that he can feed himself. Begin to give him a spoon, although his first attempts will be pretty messy. Do not expect him to eat all of the "basic foods" daily. His diet will probably average out to be adequate in nutrients over a period of several days.

No nuts, popcorn, raisins, hot dogs or grapes. These foods are still dangerous because your child might choke on these small objects or inhale them.

SCHEDULE

Your baby may still require a morning and afternoon nap or he may soon protest one and take a longer one in the late morning or afternoon. Be firm when it is time to go to bed at night and establish a definite, consistent bedtime, in his own bed.

DEVELOPMENT AND PLAY

By now most babies are walking around furniture, and if they have not already, will soon take that first independent step. Pretty soon she will even be climbing. This change from crawling to walking provides many opportunities for your baby to learn new things and also many new challenges for you as parents to keep her out of danger and/or trouble. It is certainly normal for baby's limitless curiosity to lead her to all parts of the house, the cupboards and the drawers.

You will notice that your baby is now able to pick up very small objects, such as pins, pieces of food, etc. You may also begin to see that she can drop or release an object whenever she wants or sometimes on request (such as "please give it to mommie." This leads to the new game - drop the toy (or food) which allows some adult to pick it up over and over. This is a fun game which will last as long as the adult can stand it. Your baby will also enjoy putting things such as blocks or clothespins in a milk bottle or a cup and dumping them out.

Your baby is now beginning to enjoy playing simple games such as rolling the ball back and forth to an adult or playing "patty cake."

This is an important time in your baby's life for language development. Most babies now have a couple of words besides "mama and dada." It is not too early to sit down with your baby and look at a brightly colored picture book or magazine together. Give her some books that do not tear and that you do not mind getting dirty. Talk to your child about the familiar objects in the book. Use short sentences, such as "See, there is a car," to describe them. You will find that your baby will soon try to label these objects herself. These words may not be as clear as yours but both she and you will take satisfaction in the fact that you are beginning to understand her. Do not overload your baby with too much information about the pictures. Remember, most children like the familiar and will prefer to use the same books and pictures over and over (long after you are tired of them).

SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

This is the age when you have to keep a close watch on your baby, especially outdoors. A fenced in yard is a big asset because a baby can quickly wander into the driveway or street as soon as your back is turned. By now your house should be pretty well child-proofed, with all cleaning agents and medications locked or inaccessible to a climbing child. Check around for knives, scissors, matches, and lighters. Never leave your baby alone in the house, bathtub, yard or car without supervision! A car seat is still important. You may put your child in a forward facing car seat.

Not too much discipline is really necessary yet. Try and distract your baby by giving him something to do or removing him from the scene rather than spanking. If a baby frequently returns to a forbidden thing, take it away and emphasize your point with a sharp "no." But be consistent - "no" means "no" for the same thing every day and do not overwork it. Your baby is not being disobedient; he is looking to see if his actions get the same response every time.

THE VISIT

The fourth and final pneumococcal vaccine will be given today. Your child is also old enough for the chicken pox vaccine. Your child may also have a hemoglobin level and a routine lead screen, if it has not been done at an earlier visit.