

8-9 MONTH OUR LITTLE SUNSHINE

ROUTINES- A lot has changed in the last few months. Crawling and exploring and mouthing everything in sight makes a parent's job much more demanding. Hopefully your child is sleeping well. That along with handling transitions between caregivers and eating real food will make life more child-like.



FOOD: starting real food is a challenge because so many easier options are available. Read all labels and make sure what you're giving your baby is real food and not overly processed. Try not to ruin the child's appetite prior to meals. It may require either changing your routine or asking the baby to wait a little when they're crabby and it would be easier just to give them a bottle. Nothing is worse than having a baby stuck simply on formula... the time is right to be exploring foods. It will take more effort and the weight gain may slow down. If you can do it, get rid of the bottle and use only sippy cups. At least try to use sippy cups exclusively at mealtimes. Never let your child go to bed with a bottle which can lead to dental decay or cause choking.

GRADUATE FROM FORMULA as milk or non-dairy "milks" can now be used (think save \$\$) as long as your baby is getting a good variety of foods. The formula companies are promoting their products for convenience and it is robbing children of the richness of foods. If your baby is not growing properly we can do a more individualized dietary plan. See *Plantrician project* on the web if you are a whole food advocate like us.

JUICE may be used sparingly if the label does not list "high fructose corn syrup." Some kids need it to keep stools soft. Don't ruin your baby's appetite before mealtimes. Give nothing more than water 2 hours prior to mealtimes. Baby will be hungry and maybe crabby, but the pattern of eating real food when hungry (not just taking intravenous sugar all day), is a great one to establish as soon as the voracious appetite slows down.

SOLIDS must be soft or chopped or smooshed. Just imagine if your child swallows what you give them, would it choke them or would it dissolve quickly? Realize that their preferences change day to day. You might need to re-introduce foods 10-15 times. Avoid

salty or sugary foods, nuts, seeds, popcorn, chips, pretzels, raisins, whole grapes, hot dogs, sticky foods like marshmallow, hard-textured raw fruits or vegetables that could be choke hazards. Make sure you are always with your child while they are eating.

CHEWING and **SWALLOWING** is an important task to accomplish, and coordinates the same muscles used for speech. Avoid convenience foods like yogurt in a squeeze bottle. Avoid processed finger foods even if they say they are healthy. If they have more than 3 ingredients they are not so healthy. What happens to those chemicals and oils when they get super-heated to produce those convenience foods?

ALLERGIES are rampant now it seems. In the past we *avoided* (early introduction of) foods to avoid food allergies. Nowadays they say that giving foods earlier helps *prevent* allergies. One study on nuts found that small amounts of peanut butter given earlier caused fewer allergies than when they waited a year. Try to avoid prolonged exposure of the skin to the peanut butter as they said this was irritating to some babies. Rather than using a commercial brand of peanut butter, consider blending up your own peanut butter from less processed nuts when first giving your baby peanuts.

Gluten in bread has been avoided by many lately. Maybe it is how commercial bread products are processed that is causing some people problems. Maybe some chemical besides gluten is at fault for the vast numbers of people claiming gluten intolerance. When possible use "cleaner" bakery bread (or bake your own), and make sure you give a small piece so they don't choke on it. Honey is unfortunately demonized right now due to botulism fears. That is a pity due to the great health benefits of a small amount of local honey (like from the farmer's market or local bakery) to help develop tolerance to local pollens.

SAFETY is beginning to get tricky with your child moving on their own. Block stairways, windows, check that your chest of dressers is not tippable, be aware of other tip hazards like ironing boards. Beware of your child touching things like fireplace items, stoves, coffees. They put anything they can reach into their mouth. Now baby needs to explore on their own the world

outside of a walker or saucer. That helps them develop a sense of balance and coordination. Cleaning supplies should be in upper cabinets. Homes with loving harmony have less accidents... a statistic that outstrips extensive "baby-proofing."



SLEEP can be challenging for some babies. Always put baby to bed around same time. Put baby to bed in the same room in which they will wake up. Make a routine that includes perhaps a bath, then some cuddling, reading singing or talking. Put a night light in your child's room.

PLAY TIME Take 'em outside! Put shoes on them or boots for outdoors. Make your child a true Mid-westerner! Enjoy the seasons and the textures of outside. Run your kids and they will sleep much better.

You may notice these milestones being accomplished:

- May be afraid of strangers
- May be clingy with familiar adults
- Has favorite toys
- Understands "no"
- Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "baba"
- Copies sounds and gestures of others
- Uses fingers to point at things
 - Watches the path of something as it falls
 - Looks for things he sees you hide
 - Plays peek-a-boo
 - Puts things in their mouth
 - Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
 - Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger
- Stands, holding on
- Can get into sitting position
- Sits without support
- Pulls to stand
- Crawls

We will be concerned if your child does not

- bear weight on legs with support
- sit with help
- babble ("mama," "baba," "dada")
- play any games involving back-and-forth play
- respond to own name
- recognize familiar people
- look where you point
- transfer toys from one hand to the other

RELATIONSHIPS are now formed with the trio (or more) of you. Everybody is important. Everyone does some sacrificing. But most of all this is a time to see that everyone is getting nurtured. Having a quiet Sunday to regenerate especially if you can turn off your own electronics, televisions and phones is an ancient custom that has great benefits. Getting in touch with your spiritual self will help your child as well as your spouse. Embrace this time. It is uniquely beautiful and will be gone before you know it. Be grateful and demonstrate it with some regular prayer.

DISCIPLINE is still difficult at this age. The safety of your child is paramount. But don't expect a good reasoning capacity. Explaining is good, but removing a child from dangerous situations is most important. Using a lot of loud shouting only scares your child. Some children hardly need any disapproval and other children do need more vigorous redirection.

TEETHING Some kids handle the pain of teething well and others cry bloody murder. Occasional Tylenol is ok, just don't use it all the time.

GETTING SICK Lots of viruses are fought off every week by your child, and sometimes they will get noticeably sick. Steam, even taking a shower with you in the middle of the night can work wonders for clearing out nasal passages and lungs. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) may make sleeping and eating more comfortable, baby can't say "headache" yet! If a fever (over 102°F) lasts beyond 24-48 hours, have your child seen by us.

DAYCARE is a popular place to get viruses. Ear infections occur when a child is pre-disposed by a small ear canal. Drainage from the ear or persistent fevers may be your first clue.

VACCINATIONS- maybe a flu shot

BLOOD LEAD test still required by the state

NEXT VISIT- should be at 12 months of age.

CARING FAMILY, SC 815-459-2200

Todd S Giese, MD, Racquel N Ramirez, MD, George B Gancayco, MD, Jamie TM Gancayco, MD & Lauren K Mielke, FNP Family Nurse Practitioner. Visit our website at: www.mycaringfamily.com