

# HEALTH TRACKS

A Newsletter From Local Public Health to Improve the Health of Families in NW Minnesota



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



## GREETINGS!

Hi There! Your baby will soon be 6 months old. What a difference there is between the tiny sleepy newborn and the active alert baby who now smiles and makes noises at you.

## YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH CARE

### Well-Child Check-Ups:

Now is the time to call and schedule your baby's 6th month health check-up. Your baby should have a well baby eye exam from an eye doctor within the first year from 6 to 12 months. Ask your eye doctor if they participate in this free program. Infant See is a public health program designed to insure that eye and vision care becomes an integral part of infant care to improve a child's quality of life. Call a local eye doctor to schedule your baby's appointment now.

### Immunizations (shots):

Hopefully your baby has received the first and second series of immunizations. If not, please start now. Take your baby's immunization record with you when you have his/her 6 month shots and have the health care provider fill it in and check it for complete recordings.

It is very important to keep your baby on schedule with his/her shots. If she gets behind she does not have to start over. If you are wondering whether or not your child should receive an immunization because she has a mild illness, cold, etc., please ask your health care provider or call us. There are only a few instances in which a shot should not be given on time. **Remember:** Now your child can have an influenza shot. Will need 2 shots, one month apart.

## YOUR GROWING CHILD

In the next 2 months you will notice that your baby may do some of the following:

- ✿ Rock on hands and knees
- ✿ Sit briefly with/without support
- ✿ Babble or squeal
- ✿ Laugh out loud
- ✿ Reach for and hold objects
- ✿ Put EVERYTHING into his/her mouth
- ✿ Be able to raise toes up to chest when lying on his/her back
- ✿ May be aware of strangers
- ✿ Stretch out arms to be picked up
- ✿ Prefers to play on his/her tummy
- ✿ Premature infants may develop more slowly

**REMEMBER:** *Talk to your baby often.*

## Common Health Concerns



### NURSING-BOTTLE MOUTH

If babies are given a bottle at naptime and/or bedtime, the sugar content in the liquid can cause tooth decay. Ways to avoid this include:

- ◆ do not prop the bottle nor have baby drink while lying down (this can also cause ear infections)
- ◆ do not allow baby to suck on breast for long periods of time at naptime/bedtime
- ◆ clean her mouth with clean wash cloth or gauze pad 1-2 times daily
- ◆ use pacifier instead of a naptime/bedtime bottle
- ◆ dental fluoride varnish recommended with appearance of first teeth and every 3-6 months thereafter. Contact your local public health.



### ACTIVITY TIP

Play "Peek-a-Boo" and "Pat-a-Cake" with your baby. Give baby safe objects that are different sizes, colors, weights, textures, and make different sounds.



### VOMITING AND DIARRHEA

Vomiting and/or diarrhea are common illnesses in infants. If babies have a lot of vomiting and/or diarrhea, they may lose too much body water and become dehydrated. If your baby is vomiting:

- ◆ if breastfeeding continue to do so in smaller amounts more often
- ◆ only feed clear liquids in small sips for the next 3 hours (pedialyte)
- ◆ gradually increase amounts of clear liquids and slowly add food if vomiting does not continue
- ◆ call you health care provider if no improvement in 24 hours or if he/she has signs of dehydration (see next column)

#### SIGNS OF DIARRHEA INCLUDE:

- ◆ many more bowel movements (stools)
- ◆ stools are very watery, often with a change in color and odor

#### IF HE/SHE HAS DIARRHEA:

- ◆ only feed clear liquids for 24 hours
- ◆ return to formula if diarrhea stops.
- ◆ call your health care provider if no improvement in 24 hours or if he/she has signs of dehydration (see below)

#### SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION:

- ◆ he/she does not have at least 3 wet diapers/day
- ◆ dry lips and mouth
- ◆ very sleepy and/or fussy
- ◆ flat or sunken soft spot
- ◆ possible fever

## FEEDING YOUR CHILD

If you have not already started, you can now feed your baby solid foods along with breastmilk or formula. See last newsletter for how to start solid foods.

- ★ After baby has been eating cereal, vegetables and fruit, start meats.
- ★ Remember to start 1 new food every 3-4 days.
- ★ Avoid nuts, popcorn, hard uncooked vegetables, marshmallows, peanut butter, apple chunks, and hot dogs - they can make her choke.
- ★ Offer 100% fruit juice in a cup - only 2 ounces per day at 7 months of age.
- ★ Do not give honey until over 1 year of age.
- ★ Be sure foods are soft enough to swallow without chewing.



## Safety Check

Remember to keep baby safe and baby-proof your home:

- ✓ Always place in rear-facing safety seats in the reclining position at a 45 degree angle.
- ✓ Never leave baby alone in a bath or near a pool of water no matter how shallow. Infants can drown in just a few inches of water.
- ✓ Keep plastic bags, balloons, safety pins and small objects away from baby.
- ✓ Use baby gates to block off stairways and keep him/her out of rooms where she might be injured.
- ✓ Remove harmful substances (e.g. cleaning fluids) or objects from the cupboards that are within baby's reach, or apply child-guard devices on doors and drawers.
- ✓ Check home for dangling electrical cords and use plastic plugs on electrical outlets.
- ✓ Set crib mattress in lowest position so baby won't fall out.
- ✓ Call poison control number (1-800-222-1222).
- ✓ Learn CPR.

## POSITIVE PARENTING

Now that your baby is starting to sit alone, the view of the world is full of many new things.

- ★ Allow him/her to explore a safe environment . She is very curious
- ★ Continue to read to him/her
- ★ Talk and sing to him/her often

### Babies are too young to understand rules.

If your baby is doing something that you don't like, or if he or she needs to be calmed, try to offer a change. For example:

- ★ Carry your baby around the room, or take him or her for a walk.
- ★ Give your baby something new to look at.
- ★ Check to see if he or she is hungry or needs a new diaper.



I will be writing again before your baby is 9 months old. Please let me know any change of name, address or phone number and feel free to call me about any other concerns.



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