

## Tips for Keeping Your Baby Healthy and Safe

### Car Safety

- Keep the car safety seat facing backwards until your baby is at least 2 years old or reaches the seat's weight or height limit.
- Smaller children might ride backwards for more than 2 years, and other children might reach the weight or height limit before they are 2 years old.

### Home Safety

- Lock away poisons, medications, and lawn and cleaning supplies. Call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222- 1222) if you are worried your baby has eaten something harmful.
- Keep small objects, balloons, and plastic bags away from your baby.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Put guards on windows on the second floor and higher. Keep furniture away from windows.
- Lock away knives and scissors.
- Keep your baby close enough to touch in or around water. Make sure to empty buckets, pools, and tubs when done.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.

### Starting Routines

- Try not to have your baby watch TV and videos. Never watch anything that shows people or animals being hurt or anything that is scary to your baby at this age.
- Try not to watch TV during family time.
- Start family traditions such as reading or going for a walk together.
- Fear of strangers is normal at this age. Respect your baby's fears. Ask new people to approach slowly.

# HEALTHY *and* SAFE at 12 Months



## Feeding Your Baby

- Have your baby eat during family mealtime.
- Be patient with your baby as he or she learns to eat without help. Encourage your baby to feed him or herself.
- Let your baby decide what and how much to eat.
- End the feeding when the baby stops eating.
- Avoid small, hard foods that can cause choking—nuts, popcorn, hot dogs, grapes, and hard, raw veggies.

## Routines for Meals

- Give 3 meals and 2–3 snacks spaced evenly over the day to avoid tantrums.
- Make sure caregivers use the same ideas and routines for feeding.
- Use a small plate and cup for eating and drinking.
- Provide healthy foods for meals and snacks.

## Healthy Teeth

- Take your baby for a first dental visit by 12 months.
- Brush your baby's teeth twice each day with water only. Use a soft toothbrush.
- If using a bottle, offer only water.

## Naps and Bedtime

- Your baby should have at least one nap a day. Space it to make sure your baby is tired for bed.
- Make the hour before bedtime loving and calm.
- Have a simple bedtime routine that includes reading a book.

## Disciplining Your Baby

- Try not to hit, spank, or yell at your baby.
- Keep rules for your baby short and simple.
- Use short time-outs when your baby is behaving poorly.
- Praise your baby for good behavior.
- Distract your baby with something he or she likes during bad behavior.

## Taking Care of Yourself

- Take time for yourself and your partner.
- Keep in contact with family and friends.

## Caring For Your Baby

- Play with and read to your baby often.
- Make sure everyone who cares for your baby gives healthy foods, avoids sweets, and uses the same rules for discipline.
- Make sure places your baby stays are safe.
- Only leave your baby with a mature adult.
- Think about joining a toddler playgroup or taking a parenting class.

## What to Expect at your Baby's 18 Month Visit:

Your child's doctor will talk about -

- Your baby's speech and feelings
- Getting a good night's sleep
- Keeping your home safe for your baby
- Temper tantrums and discipline
- Caring for your baby's teeth

### To Learn More

- **Poison Control Center** 1-800-222-1222
- **Child Safety Seat Inspection** 1-866-SEATCHECK, 1-866-732-8243 or [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org)
- **Immunizations** at [aap.org/immunization](http://aap.org/immunization)
- **MaineHealth Learning Resource Center** 1-866-609-5183 or <https://mainehealth.org/healthy-communities/learning-resource-center>
- **Barbara Bush Children's Hospital** [www.bbch.org](http://www.bbch.org)
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- **2-1-1 Maine** (a directory of local services) 211 or 1-877-463-6207 or [211maine.org](http://211maine.org)
- **MaineHealth** [mainehealth.org](http://mainehealth.org)