Caring for your 6-month-old baby

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Keep Your Baby Safe

Use a Car Seat

Install the car seat properly in the back seat, rear-facing until your baby reaches the seat manufacturer's maximum rear-facing height or weight limit.

Use a Safe Crib

- Crib slats must be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart and the child cannot get their head between the slats.
- Don't use a crib with sharp edges that your baby can hit.

Prevent Suffocation

- Put your baby on your baby's back to sleep.
- A string or balloon can choke your baby. Keep strings, balloons and necklaces away from your baby.
- Some toys are small enough or have parts small enough that your baby could choke on them. Don't give your baby toys like these. Give your baby toys made for your baby's age.

Prevent Injuries

- Don't leave your baby alone - ever. Use extra care when your baby is in water, near young children or pets, or on any surface from which your baby could fall.
- Don't use a walker that will let your baby move across the floor. Your baby does not need shoes until your baby can walk outdoors.
- "Child-proof" your home (see our "Child-Proofing Checklist").
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120ºF.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Test alarms monthly.
- Keep your baby away from hot things (like cigarettes or an iron). Don't hold your baby when you are drinking something hot (like coffee), using a fire place, or cooking on the hot stove.
- Protect your baby from sunburn. Use sunscreen.
- Never shake, toss or hit your baby.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Continue breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. Offer soft, safe complementary foods with iron; vary grains rather than using only rice cereal.
- Breastfed or partly breastfed infants need vitamin D 400 IU daily. Formula-fed infants need it if taking less than 32 oz of formula daily; confirm with the clinician.
- Offer varied foods with safe textures around 6 months when ready. Avoid honey before age 1 and hard, round choking hazards.
- Follow hunger and fullness cues. Discuss feeding or growth concerns with the clinician.
- Never prop a bottle or put your baby in bed with a bottle.

Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Encourage Healthy Development

- Create a schedule for your baby's day and try to keep to it.
- Smile at and play with your baby as much as possible.
- Excite your baby's sense of sight. Show your baby a sturdy, brightly colored picture book.
- Excite your baby's sense of touch. Let your baby touch objects with different textures (like soft, hard, glossy or furry).
- Excite your baby's sense of hearing. Talk and sing to your baby and give your baby objects that make noise (like a bell or rattle)
- Strengthen your baby and your baby's coordination. Help your baby push up on your baby's arms while on your baby's belly. Help your baby sit up in the corner of a couch. Offer your baby something to pull on.
- Never yell at your baby. Keep your baby safe by moving your baby away from danger or by removing from your baby the object that makes you worry may harm them.
- Avoid screen time with your baby by limiting exposure to Cell Phones, Tablets, or Laptops.

Deal with Crying

- When your baby cries, ask yourself, "Is my baby hungry? Does your baby want to be changed? Does your baby want to be held? Is your baby too stimulated (from too much touch, noise or light)? Is your baby in pain (like from teething)? Does your baby have a fever?"

- Don’t feed your baby every time your baby cries. Don’t use a pacifier every time your baby cries. Use it only when you think your baby needs to calm down.
- For teething, gently massage gums or use a cool, not frozen, teether. Avoid numbing gels; ask the clinician before medicine.

Sleep

- Put your baby in the crib on your baby’s back when your baby is drowsy but still awake.
- Your baby needs naps and a regular bedtime.
- Respond to nighttime needs. Ask about feeding, growth and safe soothing.

Clean Your Baby

- If your baby boy is uncircumcised, don’t try to pull back your baby’s foreskin.
- Don’t bathe your baby but every other day. When you do, use warm water and mild baby soap.

Prevent Sickness - Identify It Early

- Do not induce vomiting or use ipecac. For suspected poisoning, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Save this number in your cell phone.
- Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Do not smoke with the baby in the car; do not smoke in the home.
- Call the clinic right away if your baby is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. Sneezing, watery eyes and a stuffy or runny nose are cold symptoms. A fever is a rectal temperature of 100.4°F or higher. A dehydrated baby has fewer than five wet diapers a day, is much less active than usual, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Development

All babies develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your baby:

- Blows bubbles
- Starts babbling at others
- Makes more sounds in a row and Copies sounds
- Starts to recognize your baby’s name
- Feels nervous with strangers and seems happy seeing familiar faces
- Rolls over
- Rocks back and forth on hands and knees to prepare for crawling
- Reaches for, grabs and moves objects from hand to hand
- Tries to pick up objects using a raking movement of the hand

Your baby’s next visit is at about 9 months. At this check-up we want to see how your baby is growing and developing. Remember to bring your baby’s immunization (shot) record with you.