

# You and your premature baby: 9 months



Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

[www.childrenshc.org](http://www.childrenshc.org)

## **NICU Follow-Up Clinic**

(612) 813-6722, Children's - Minneapolis

(651) 220-8063, Children's - St. Paul

## **What to expect this month**

Birthdays are a time of remembering. Many parents of high-risk infants have mixed feelings about their child's first birthday. On one hand, they are happy as the day approaches. On the other hand, they may feel nervous, irritable, or reluctant to plan a party. Why the mixed feelings?

Just like parents of full-term babies, parents of high-risk infants can describe in complete detail the day of their child's birth. In addition to the joy, they remember the fear and anxiety as they worried about their child's well-being and the consequences of an early or high-risk birth. Recalling those early days may make you feel sad, depressed, nervous, irritable, or tired. Such feelings are common to parents whose babies had such a rough start.

As your child's birthday approaches, take time to sort out your feelings. Know that sadness is normal. Give yourself some time to grieve for the birth experience you wanted, but didn't get. And then look at how far your child has come!

## **Caring for your baby**

### **Standing up**

Once crawling, your baby will soon be ready to pull up to a standing position. How can you help? Try putting a toy on a couch or coffee table; the baby will want to stand up and reach the toy. First, the baby will need to kneel, then rest the weight on one knee while straightening the other leg and pulling the body up with the arms.

If your baby tends to straighten both legs at once, you can help your baby practice bending one leg and straightening the other. Sit down and face the baby toward you, straddling one of your legs. (This is easiest if you sit on the floor with one leg straight out.) As you slowly rock the baby from side to side, one leg will bend as the other leg straightens. Be sure to hold your baby firmly around the waist so the rocking feels safe.

## This month with baby

Here's what 9-month-old babies might tell you...if they could!

### Movement

I like to:

- use my thumb and one finger to pick up toys.
- practice crawling. I can go anywhere I want.
- hold my cup and feed myself.
- use furniture to help pull myself up to stand.

I enjoy it when you:

- give me small objects, like a few Cheerios, so I can practice picking them up.
- get into a crawling position and play chase with me. This encourages me to practice my crawling.

### Playing

I like to:

- perform for you when you reward me by clapping.
- have my own toys.
- be around other children.

I enjoy it when you:

- blow bubbles for me to watch.
- hide toys under a can or cloth or in your pocket so I can find them.
- play a game in which you jiggle me up and down, and swing me around.

### Thinking

I like to:

- uncover a toy that is covered.
- remember a game from a previous day.
- look forward to your praise when I imitate you or do what you ask.

I enjoy it when you:

- clap and smile when I perform for you.
- let me choose between two toys.
- do things I can imitate like pat-a-cake, baby is s-o-o-o big, and combing my hair.

### Communication

I like to:

- imitate coughs, tongue clicks, and kisses.
- use words meaningfully. I may say ma-ma or da-da when I am talking about you.
- listen to conversation.

I enjoy it when you:

- tell me a story about what I did today.
- use a variety of voices, whisper, make funny noises, or speak in a sing-song voice.
- use a tape recorder to record you and me "talking."