Your infant is curious, mobile, active, and capable, but definitely not concerned with safety or being neat. Babies at this age are explorers. They don’t realize they are making a mess. You need to be understanding and keep a sharp eye out for dangerous situations. Your baby is just doing what comes naturally—exploring his world.

FEEDING YOUR NINE-MONTH-OLD

By now, your baby has developed a long way toward independent feeding. Ideally, his meals are with the rest of the family, and he is assisting with his feeding. At the age of nine months, your baby is developing a more precise grip and can pick up items with his thumb and forefinger now.

FINGER FOODS

Think of the many finger foods you might offer—all should be cut into SMALL pieces.

• Soft, mild cheese (keep small to prevent choking)
• Cooked vegetable strips—potato, carrot, peas, green or waxed beans, zucchini
• Toast
• Tortilla (not tortilla chips)
• Rice
• Soft and tender pieces of cooked meat or chicken
• Peeled soft fruit wedges or slices
• Bagel

Offer a variety of foods. Your baby is an individual and may have likes and dislikes you do not have. Be sure to offer her a wide variety of foods—occasionally even ones you may not like. She is at the age to form opinions about food, but right now, when food is an adventure, she is especially open to discovery!
This month you should continue to advance the texture and variety of your baby’s diet. Remember, one goal of feeding your baby is to continuously evaluate her abilities and readiness and to move toward the ultimate goal—table food! Some babies are ready sooner than others, and some babies have more of a spirit of adventure and discovery and may be more open to the change to solid/table foods. The most successful parents are those who follow Baby’s lead.

Babies vary in how they view bottle or breastfeeding at this point. Some babies really want and need the closeness of the bottle/breast feedings, and it is comforting to them to continue. Others are so curious and independent they seem almost insulted by the calming routine. Your baby may be somewhere in between. Just follow your baby’s lead, and adjust the amounts of solid/table foods and liquids you offer at meals and snacks. By now, if your baby is eating table foods, you will want to offer the breast milk or formula feeding after the meal. This will encourage the baby’s move toward a more solid/table food diet.

Speaking of snacks, your baby will probably do well with in-between meal feedings, because he still doesn’t have the stomach capacity to go straight from one meal to the next without “refueling.” This way, your baby can manage to eat with the family without becoming too hungry between meals.

All children grow, learn, and develop at different rates. The information in this brochure is considered typical for children of this age. If you do all you can to help children grow and develop now, they will have the best chance to do well in school and in life.

References: