

# Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

## Baby's First Steps

**Most babies start to walk anytime between 9 and 15 months of age. Some may not take their first steps until they are 14 to 17 months old. Your baby will walk when his body is ready and his muscles are strong.**

It takes more than strong leg muscles for a baby to be able to walk. Back, neck and arm muscles help with movement and balance. Strong trunk muscles help with posture.

In the first year of your baby's life, he will learn and develop skills to help him walk. Usually around 5 – 6 months of age, your baby will enjoy using his leg muscles to bounce up and down. Anxious to explore his world, he learns to roll over, sit and crawl.

At around 8 months of age, your baby will try to pull herself up and try to stand. She will use your hands and furniture for support as she moves around. As her legs get stronger, she will be able to stand without support.

Learning to sit down may be a little tricky. He may pull himself up to stand, but not know how to sit back down. At 9 or 10 months, your baby learns how to bend his knees. This will help him learn to sit down after standing.



You may see your baby stand, stoop and squat when she is around 11 months old. Soon, she will be taking a few steps forward. Between 13 and 18 months, she will be toddling around without help. You may even see her start to climb stairs, though she may have trouble getting back down to you.

Enjoy each of the exciting firsts you help your child achieve. If you have any questions concerning your baby's development, consult her doctor.

### How can you help your baby learn to walk?

- Give her daily tummy time. While on her tummy, hold objects in front of her at eye level. Encourage her to lift her head and chest to see the object. Always stay with your baby while she is on her tummy.
- As he learns to stand, show him how to bend his knees to sit down.
- Hold on to her hands as she tries to walk toward you.
- Let him go barefoot when walking inside. A baby's toes curl and grip the surface as he walks. This helps him to move and keep his balance. Use shoes when outside or on a rough surface.
- Do not use a walker. Walkers prevent upper leg muscles from developing correctly.
- Give your baby push toys that he can hold onto while he walks.
- Keep your home safe as your baby learns to crawl and walk. Get down on her level to observe what she can see and reach.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
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