



How do I know when to seek help from a physiotherapist for my child?

Do you have a small baby at home, but have already been watching children of different ages and seeing what they can do and wondering how old they are?

Do you wonder what kind of leaps children make in their development from birth to about three years of age? **They observe, discover, they learn to sit up, to crawl, they repeat sounds and words after us, they take objects in their little hands, carry things from place to place.**

A child's psychomotor development is a rapid and fascinating process that involves not only physical growth, but also the development of motor, cognitive and social skills. However, **it is important to remember that each child develops at their own pace**, but there are certain milestones in a child's development that can serve as landmarks in their development for parents. Particularly in the first few months of a baby's life, the baby should have certain skills and develop his or her abilities on his or her own without premature assistance from the parent.

Sometimes, however, you may find that there is something wrong with your baby's development. **By observing your baby and through your daily contact with him/her, you notice and know best, if something is not ok.**

Let's take a look together month by month at what kind of baby's behaviour should alert us and what we can do to support our baby's development.



HOW DO I RECOGNIZE THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG?

Month 1

- The baby is unable to lie on its back and tummy without falling sideways.
- Baby has a large and frequent head tilt. On the tummy the tilt causes it to fall to one side, lying on its back it often arches its back.
- The baby is unable to turn its head to either side after covering its right or left field of vision.
- The baby is unable to relax the fist on its hands.



Month 2

- Baby falls over from tummy to back on one or both sides. This is the sign of probable overuse of the back muscles.
- Baby is uncomfortable in the tummy position.
- The baby has a side preference - it prefers one side to which it turns its head or bows it only to one side.
- The baby has a large back tilt of the head. In the supine position, the skin is wrinkled

and may be reddened; lying on its back, it often 'arches'.

- The baby still does not know how to relax its fists on its hands, the hand is clenched even in the "fencer" position.
- The baby performs the "fencer" position only to one side.

Month 3

- The baby falls from the tummy to the back to one side. This is a sign of instability.
- The baby often leans back in the supine position. It has a large head tilt when on its tummy.
- The baby is unable to lift and keep its feet off the mat in the supine position.
- When the legs are raised above the mat, the abdominal muscles are spaced apart. This is called 'diastasis'. Diastasis in babies occurs because of under-development of the abdominal muscles and connective tissue. In children, diastasis usually corrects itself as the muscles grow and strengthen.





- The baby still prefers to turn the head to one side.
- Baby does not connect its hands together.

Months 4 & 5

- The baby still can't keep its body and head on axis.
- In the tummy position, the baby keeps falling to the side, the head is tilted back or the baby performs the so-called airplane.
- When the baby tries to roll over on its side or on its tummy, there is a back tilt of the head or arching of the back.
- In the supine position, the baby often lifts its head as if to pull itself into a sitting position.
- The baby does not pick up objects and is not interested in toys.

DID YOU KNOW ...

that you can prevent one side preference?

Place the baby in different places in the room to give the baby visual impulses from both sides.
For example, one time the baby looks out of the window by turning to the left, the next time we place the baby so that it is forced to look to the right.

Month 6

- The baby can't turn from its back to its tummy and onto its side.
- It turns from back to tummy using a backbend with a foot bounce.
- From the tummy position, the baby falls back onto its back.
- The Baby does not master the second upright position – it is not supported by outstretched and extended arms on its tummy.
- Baby pivots on tummy, turning around its axis to one side only.
- The baby is still squinting.



Months 7 – 9

- The baby turns from back to tummy to one side only.
- The baby comes into the sitting position through only one side for more than 14 days.
- Baby skips the crawling stage.
- When climbing, baby has toes turned out and heels turned in.
- Baby has different stride lengths on the right and left side.
- The infant chooses any alternate method of forward movement, e.g., rolls on the buttocks and rests on one hand, climbs with one foot stepped forward.
- The baby sits in a 'W-sit', with the buttocks between the heels.
- The baby is still squinting.

Months 10 – 12



- The baby does not sit on its buttox bumps, which causes a rounded back when sitting.
- While sitting it has an excessively arched back in the lumbar region.
- The baby can only sit in a W sitting position.
- The child stands and walks around furniture but skips the climbing phase.
- Child stands only on its tiptoes.
- The child has been coming up into the standing position for more than 14 days over one leg only.
- The child walks around the furniture only to one side.

Months 12 – 24

- The child „walks“ mostly on its knees.
- When walking, it turns its toe tips inward.
- It walks on the tips of its toes.
- Child does not walk at 18 months.
- Child trips and falls frequently.
- „W sit“ still predominates.
- The child has noticeably sunken (rotated inwards) ankles when standing and walking.



WHAT SIGNS SHOULD CATCH MY ATTENTION?

! **WHEN THE CHILD DOES NOT REACH THE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES** - The child is not turning, sitting, crawling or walking at the right time in their life.

! **UNUSUAL MOVEMENTS** - Uses only one side of the body, has irregular movements or odd posture positioning.

! **MUSCLE PROBLEMS** – The child's muscles are too weak or too stiff.

! **BALANCE PROBLEMS** – The child frequent falls or has difficulty with coordination.

! **VISIBLE DISCOMFORT WHEN IN MOVEMENT** - Child cries or shows discomfort when moving around.

Remember that every child is different and unique, so there is no need to get upset if your child is not mastering this or that activity compared to another child of the same age. **The speed at which your baby develops in the first year of life is individual.** What is important is that the baby achieves each skill on its own and performs it well, that is, as it should.



WHEN SHOULD I VISIT A PHYSIOTHERAPIST WITH MY CHILD?

If you are worried about your child's development and **your parental intuition tells you that something is wrong, rely on it.** Talk to your paediatrician or seek the help of a physiotherapist. **Don't risk your child learning poor movement patterns that will stay with them throughout their life.**

Your baby will thank you in adulthood for the early help you provide today.

Look for ways to support and guide your child in a positive way and provide an environment in which he or she can develop successfully. Monitoring your child's progress and providing support and love are key to their healthy development.