

Getting Moving and Learning to Crawl



Many primary caregivers feel eager for their baby to start moving. By 9 months old, most babies have started to move around in *some* way. They may roll to reach a new location or creep, crawl, cruise, and/or pull to standing. The process of learning to crawl is a complex one. Some babies crawl, but some babies skip it all together. Your baby needs to coordinate many areas of their body to crawl. It can take a while to get moving, and that's OK.

If you push your baby to develop a skill before they are ready, it can make them not want to try. This slows down the learning process. Even so, here are some strategies to support your baby's mobility:

- **Give baby lots of time on firm surfaces, like the floor.** If you're worried about cleanliness, put down a blanket or play mat. Beds are too soft to help baby develop the muscles and balance they need to practice moving. Plus, you have to watch them closely, so they don't roll off.
- **Let your baby go barefoot.** Baby shoes look cute, but babies need all the muscles in their feet and toes to grip the floor.
- **Give your baby plenty of tummy time.** On their belly, your baby develops muscle strength in their shoulders, arms, back, and trunk (torso) to help them learn to crawl.
- **Encourage baby to reach for and move toward the toys and objects they are interested in.** Lay items a



BABIES ON THE MOVE:

Creep: Babies push themselves along on their bellies

Crawl: Babies move on their hands and knees

Cruise: Babies pull to standing and move from spot to spot while holding onto furniture

short distance from your baby. See if they can move themselves toward these objects. If toys are always brought to babies, they may not be as motivated to move.

- **Make sure baby has a safe space to explore.** Always keep your eye on them. Ask your HealthySteps Specialist any questions about how to babyproof your home.
- **Place the palms of your hands behind your baby’s feet when they are on all fours.** This helps them feel stable. It also gives them something to “push off” from while they are learning to crawl.

Your baby may find their own way of crawling. They may even go backward at first and get upset to find themselves going in the wrong direction. They may start crawling on their hands and knees or “army crawl” on their stomach. Some babies “crab crawl” sideways. Others may scoot on their bottom.

If your baby is slow to start moving, check with your HealthySteps Specialist or pediatric primary care provider if you are worried. Before you know it, you’ll be chasing them around, just trying to keep up!

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

