

BABY YOUR BABY

From Birth to Four Months



Congratulations on the arrival of your baby! Your new family member is a special, one-of-a-kind little person who is probably making big changes in your life. You may feel emotions ranging from extreme joy to overwhelming responsibility. But don't feel alone. Most parents share these same feelings. The purpose of the Baby Your Baby Newsletters is to give you important information that will help you and your baby grow together as you develop your new and special relationship. Each newsletter is designed to cover topics of interest to most parents as their children grow and develop through various stages of infancy and early childhood. You will want to keep all five newsletters and refer back to them.

Schedule visits for well child care and immunizations at 2 weeks, 2 months, and 4 months of age

You and Your Baby

Each baby is an individual with a unique personality, temperament, and group of talents. Every baby needs affection and encouragement from his family. Yours is no exception!

The following helpful ideas can make your life, and your baby's, easier and happier.

- Start a baby book! Records of well child care visits, immunizations, and development can all be kept in a health record. The **Baby Your Baby Health Keepsake** has been created just for this purpose. You may have received one while you were pregnant. If you don't have one, please call 1-800-826-9662 for your free copy.
- Set aside some private time for yourself and don't feel guilty about it. It's important to take time out now and then.
- The "Baby Blues" — feeling discouraged, tired, overwhelmed — can happen after any big change in life. If time, extra rest, and patience don't seem to help, ask your health care provider, family or friends for help.
- It may be hard to find time for everyone in the family. If you have other children, they also need your love, care, and attention. Try to give them some special time with you. Let them know that their feelings and needs are important to you.

Remember that your baby is yours to love and enjoy. He depends on you as a source of joy and understanding in his world.

Your Developing Baby

Not all babies sit, smile, or reach out at exactly the same age, but they do develop in a predictable way. Every baby develops at his own rate with his own style.



GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

Your baby's first task is to adjust to his new world. He needs to feel that there is some consistency and order to his days and nights. He also needs to learn that when he cries you will come to take care of his needs.

DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE MUSCLES

A newborn's neck and back muscles aren't strong enough to support his head, so you need to provide that support when lifting your baby. At 3 to

4 months of age, your baby may hold his head steady while supported in a sitting position. When on his stomach, he may lift his head and support himself on his forearms.

DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL MUSCLES

The small muscles that young babies learn to control first are those around their eyes. Your baby will enjoy seeing new things and will soon turn his head toward sounds.

Crying

Crying is your baby's first form of communication. Babies cry for a lot of reasons like hunger, discomfort, and stress. As you get to know your baby's cries you will be able to know what he needs.

If your baby continues to cry after you have fed and changed him, he might be tired, bored, lonely, or need to be held. Avoid feeding your baby every time he cries.

When your baby cries, there are many ways to comfort and soothe him, including:

- Rock and cuddle baby.
- Give him a pacifier.
- Change baby's position.
- Hold baby on your shoulder.
- Play soft music.
- Sing to baby.
- Move baby to a different room.
- Let someone else hold baby.

It is important that you respond to your baby when he cries. A prompt response teaches your baby that help is nearby and makes him feel comfortable and loved. However, it is okay for your baby to cry for a few minutes while he is falling asleep after you have taken care of all his needs.

Between 3 and 4 weeks of age, some babies begin to display vigorous crying that cannot be soothed by feeding, rocking or other comforting measures. These crying spells usually occur in the evening. They often increase in length and intensity after 4 weeks of age and continue until 6 to 10 weeks of age. Here are some suggestions to help parents get through this difficult time:

- Begin with a medical evaluation by your baby's health care provider to make sure your baby isn't sick.
- Ask about formula changes or colic medicines; these may or may not be effective.
- Because crying periods frequently happen in the evening, try to reduce your stress and keep things calm at this time. You might have to rearrange your schedule so you can better attend to your baby.
- Wrap your baby snugly in a thin blanket and place him in a quiet, dimly lit room.
- Activities like rocking or a ride in a car seat can help.
- When all else fails, take a break. Ask grandparents, a babysitter, or someone else you trust to give you help.
- It is okay to put your baby down in the crib and take a few minutes by yourself if you are losing patience.
- Never shake your baby!

Handle With Care!

Certain types of activities can seriously hurt a baby. One such activity is shaking or jarring. Some parents have unintentionally injured their baby during rough play activities, such as throwing the baby in the air and catching him suddenly.

This sudden jarring can tear fragile blood vessels in the head and cause internal bleeding. Bouncing a baby on your knee too hard or not restraining him in a car

safety seat can have the same effect.

Young infants are especially vulnerable to injury from shaking and jarring due to their lack of head, neck and back control. Support your baby's head and neck and avoid activities and behaviors that might harm him. Remember, even older babies with good head and neck control can be injured by shaking or jarring.

Sleep

The usual pattern of sleep for newborns is one of short "cat naps" during the day and night. You can expect periods of sleep to be broken up by crying and fussing.

Newborns sleep between 8 and 20 hours a day. The older your baby becomes, the fewer naps he needs, and the longer he will sleep at one time.

Your baby's most important learning takes place between birth and 4 years of age.

Many parents worry about SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Even though SIDS doesn't happen very often, health care providers now recommend ways to reduce the risk to your baby.

- Baby should sleep on his back (naps too), unless your health care provider has given you other advice.
- Be sure that baby's mattress is firm with no more than a thin covering, such as a special fitted sheet, on it.
- Don't let baby get too warm while sleeping. Keep the temperature in baby's room so that it feels comfortable for you. Don't overdress or bundle baby.
- Don't use fluffy blankets or comforters. Baby should never sleep on a sheepskin, waterbed, soft couch or chair cushions, pillow or other soft material.
- Do not place pillow, stuffed toys, or

extra bedding in baby's crib. This can cause your baby to be smothered or suffocate.

- There is a lot of debate about whether it is safe to sleep with your baby. This is sometimes called "bed-sharing" or "cosleeping." There is not enough evidence to prove cosleeping with your baby is safe. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies should not share a sleep surface with anyone. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in the same room as you but in a separate crib. This allows you to get to your baby easily for breastfeeding but keeps him safe while he sleeps.

Remember, SIDS is rare. Don't let the fear of SIDS spoil the enjoyment of having a new baby.

Also, remember to give baby plenty of "tummy time." Even though he sleeps on his back, he needs time to play on his stomach and develop those large muscles that help him lift his head now and crawl when he gets a few months older.

Seeing

At birth, babies can only focus on objects that are 8 to 15 inches away, about the distance from his eyes to yours as you nurse or feed your baby. Things that are farther away are blurred.

Although newborns are able to pay attention to patterns and shapes, they like looking at faces best.

As the first weeks go by, give your baby a colorful mobile and other toys to look at.

Take time to talk to your new baby, face to face. Before your baby is 2 months of age he will reward you with his first smile.

Hearing and Speech

Your baby's most important learning takes place between birth and 4 years of age. During this time, he will learn to communicate — first to understand what people say, and then to talk. This is a good time for mom and dad to start reading to him for 15 to 20 minutes every day.

Your baby was born with the ability to make sound. Around 1 month of age babies make cooing and gurgling sounds along with crying. By 3 months of age babies begin to babble.

In order to develop normal speech and language patterns, your baby must be able to hear. If you think your baby cannot hear, ask your health care provider to refer you to a licensed audiologist who can test his hearing. Tell your health care provider if other family members have had hearing or speech problems. Hearing can be tested any time after birth. The earlier that hearing loss is found, the better. Your baby's hearing was probably tested in the hospital before he came home. The following checklist is a guide to normal hearing development for a baby from birth to 4 months of age. Check to see if your baby does most of the things listed below:

- *Is startled by loud sounds*
- *Is soothed by mother's voice*
- *When sleeping in a quiet room, begins to move, wakes up, or cries when someone talks or when there is a noise.*

Nutrition

Breast milk is the best food for your baby during the first year. Breast milk contains an ideal balance of nutrients for your baby and antibodies that help protect your baby from certain illnesses.

When a mother cannot or chooses not to breastfeed, formula can be substituted. Do not water down your baby's formula. Doing so can lead to water intoxication which can cause seizures. Adding water to formula or breastmilk will decrease the nutrients your baby is receiving which can slow growth and development. Cow's milk — whole, 2% or skim — should not be given to babies until they are at least 1 year old.

Babies are usually ready for solid foods (baby foods) around 6 months of age while still breast or formula feeding. Before you start using baby foods, talk to your health care provider.

Many women are able to breastfeed even when they are working full-time. This takes some planning. Breastfeed your baby solely for at least 4 to 6 weeks before you go back to work. This helps to get your milk supply well-established. Bottles of your breast milk can be used

for feedings when you are away from your baby. To maintain your milk production, it is best to continue your regular number of feedings, by pumping and breastfeeding, about the same each day.

Feeding times will be more enjoyable and rewarding when you hold your baby. If you have questions or concerns about how your baby is feeding, check with your health care provider.

Ideally it is best to not introduce solid foods before 6 months of age. Infants who receive foods before this age may choke on food, develop allergies, or consume less of what is needed from breast milk.



Well Child Care

Well child care is a scheduled time when you take your child to the doctor to see how your baby is developing and to receive immunizations. Your health care provider will tell you when you need to schedule these visits. During your well child visits, your health care provider will do an exam, and talk to you about your child's growth, development, behavior, discipline, and eating and sleeping patterns. Take time before each well child visit to write down any questions you have about your child.

Immunizations

Newborn babies get special substances called antibodies from their mothers. These antibodies protect children against many diseases. But this protection does not last forever. It usually wears off in the first year of life. You can keep your child protected by getting him vaccinated.

Vaccines help your child's body prepare

to fight deadly diseases by making protective antibodies. These antibodies know how to destroy disease germs before they invade the child's body so that your child will not become ill. If your child is not vaccinated and is exposed to a disease, the child's body may not be strong enough to fight the disease.

You might not think that diseases like rubella or mumps are a serious threat today because you don't see or hear much about them. But they are still around. If we stop vaccinating against these diseases, many more people will become infected. Vaccinating your child will keep him healthy.

For more information about immunizations, call the Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659 or visit www.immunize-utah.org.

Newborn Tests

When your baby is 2 to 4 weeks of age, you need to take him back to your health care provider for the second newborn screening test. Be sure to take with you the newborn screening form and envelope you received in the hospital. This is also a good time to share your baby's family health history with your health care provider. Find out if birth defects, learning, speech, or hearing problems, the "baby blues," and other chronic health problems tend to run in your family.

It is important to have your baby tested for certain disorders that can cause mental retardation if untreated. When found early, treatment can allow a baby to grow and develop more normally. If a baby's test is abnormal, the health care provider is notified and he will contact you to arrange more tests.

Secondhand Smoke

Do not smoke around your baby! When your baby breathes in cigarette smoke from the air, things happen that you can't see. The baby's heartbeat speeds up, blood pressure rises, and dangerous carbon monoxide seeps into his blood. Since babies breathe faster than adults, they breathe in 2-3 times more polluted air per unit of body weight.

Babies of parents who smoke at home

have more ear infections and runny noses, and may develop lung diseases, like bronchitis and pneumonia. They are also at higher risk of SIDS. Cigarette smoke is also very harmful to babies with asthma.

If someone smokes around your baby, ask them to go outside to smoke and then to wash their hands. If you or someone you know would like to stop smoking, you can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help.

Safety

IN THE CAR

Parents spend a lot of time keeping their baby healthy, well cared-for and protected. But, too many parents, grandparents, and others allow infants to ride unprotected in cars and trucks. Make sure your baby always rides in an approved car safety seat. Teach grandparents and others how to use your car seat properly.

Here are some helpful hints:

- Infants should ride in rear-facing safety seats as long as possible, until they are at least two years old AND 20 pounds.
- Always put baby in the back seat. This is especially important in cars with a passenger air bag. The impact of an air bag hitting the back of the safety seat can cause injury or death.
- Install the car seat at a 45 degree angle. If baby slumps to one side or the other, roll up two small blankets and place them on either side of baby to add support. Never place the blanket around the top of baby's head or behind the baby.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level. Make sure the buckled harness straps fit snugly. They should be tight enough that you can't pinch the straps at the shoulder.
- Always put the infant seat's carrying handle in the down position while driving.
- Never buy a used car seat or use a car seat that has been in a crash.

Car seats can reduce traffic deaths among young children by more than 70 percent — if seats are used correctly. If

you don't have a car safety seat for your baby, get one today. You can buy one from any number of stores. If you need help installing your car seat, call your local health department or Safe Kids coalition.

IN THE CRIB

Here are a few guidelines to make sure your crib is safe for your baby:

- Spaces between crib slats should be 2 3/8 inches or less so that baby's head or body will not slip through. Cribs that have wider spaces between slats should not be used.
- Do not use a crib that has drop-down side rails. They are dangerous and babies can become trapped between the rails and mattress and suffocate.
- The mattress must be the right size for the crib. A mattress is too small if you can fit more than two fingers between it and the crib sides.
- Never prop a bottle in baby's mouth and leave him; he may spit up and breathe in the fluid. The sugars in milk and juices can also lead to tooth decay.
- Keep window blind and electrical cords away from cribs.

Family Health History

Learning about your family health history is one of the best things you can do for your baby. This is because health problems that run in your family (like asthma or diabetes) can increase your baby's risk of developing the same problem. But the good news is, by knowing your family health history, you can make lifestyle and screening choices to keep you and your baby healthy. Talk to close family members (parents, siblings, grandparents, and aunts and uncles) about:

- health problems they have had
- age when the problem started
- lifestyle habits (diet, weight, exercise and smoking habits)
- age and cause of death for family members who have died.

Take time to share what you learn with your baby's health care provider.

Postpartum Health for Moms

Getting back into "regular" clothes is exciting yet challenging for most new moms. But don't expect to be able to get into your favorite pair of jeans for several months, at least. Keep in mind that it took 9 months to gain your pregnancy weight so it will take time to lose it.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Start out slowly. You need to conserve your energy to recover from labor and delivery. Many health care providers advise waiting until after your first postpartum checkup (usually six weeks after delivery) to resume an exercise program.

After those first six weeks, you can begin walking to increase circulation and get some general exercise. Do what you can handle, even if it's only 10 to 15 minutes, and increase your time as you get stronger. Walk with a normal stride and let your arms swing naturally by your sides. Warm up with five to 10 minutes of rhythmic activity such as marching, side-to-side lunges, shoulder rolls, and arm circles.

NUTRITION

It was important for you to eat right during your pregnancy. It is just as important to take care of yourself now that you have had your baby - especially if you are breastfeeding. Eat plenty of healthy food. It's the raw material for the milk you'll be making for baby. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and other drugs. They'll get into your breast milk and into your baby. Try to include the following in your diet every day:

- 3 cups of vegetables - variety is important
- 2 cups of fruit - easy on the juice
- 7 ounces of bread, cereals, rice or pasta - make 1/2 whole grain
- 3 cups of milk, yogurt or cheese- go low-fat or fat-free
- 6 ounces of meat, poultry, fish, dried beans, eggs or nuts - low-fat or lean meats

Visit www.choosemyplate.gov for more tips on eating healthy.