

Infancy

In your baby's life, infancy is a time of exciting physical and emotional growth.

Your baby will triple in weight, grow many inches, and learn how to sit up and stand. He may even take his first steps. Emotionally, he will develop bonds of love and trust with the people around him. The ways you nurture him now lay the foundation for him to grow into a self-confident, active toddler.



Parents and Health Professionals: Partners for a Healthy Baby

Health professionals like your baby's doctors and nurses are your partners in keeping your infant healthy. Each of you brings something special to the effort. Health professionals know about child health care, growth, and development. You have the day-to-day experience that makes you an expert on your baby. You are also the best person to make sure your baby gets the kinds of care she needs.

Health Professional Visits During Infancy

Because your baby is changing so fast, your health professional will want to see her at the following ages for regular checkups:

- Newborn
- 1 month
- 4 months
- Within the first week
- 2 months
- 6 months
- 9 months

These visits are important. They give your health professional a chance to make sure your baby is healthy and growing well. They are also a time for you to ask any questions or discuss concerns. At these visits, your baby will get a physical exam. Your health professional may check her hearing and vision or do other screening tests. Your baby may also be immunized against some of these diseases:

- Hepatitis B
- Polio (IPV)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- H. *influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)

Social Development

During early infancy, you and your baby are developing a strong, loving bond. The way you cuddle and play together is the basis for his future social development. It helps him learn what to expect and how to act with other people.

Things to Discuss with Your Health Professional

- Ways to help older brothers and sisters play safely with the baby.
- Concerns about the way your baby acts around you or others.

Eating

Your baby will learn a lot about eating and drinking in her first year. A whole new world of tastes, textures, and skills will open up. You can do a lot to help her eat well.



Things to Discuss with Your Health Professional

- Concerns about your baby's weight.
- What to do if your baby has colic, seems allergic, or has problems with any solid foods.
- What to do if you have any difficulties with breastfeeding or bottlefeeding.

Oral Health

It's never too soon to start taking care of your baby's gums and teeth. With regular cleaning, your baby will have a beautiful and healthy smile right from the start.

Take Care of Gums and Teeth

- Even before your baby's first tooth appears, you can clean his gums. Gently wipe them after each feeding with a clean, damp washcloth.
- After teeth appear, clean them gently with a soft infant toothbrush. Use just water—not toothpaste!

Things to Discuss with Your Health Professional

- How to relieve teething symptoms.
- Whether your baby needs fluoride supplements.
- When and how to help your baby stop sucking his thumb or using a pacifier.

Safety

Now that you have a baby, look around your house with new eyes. Ask yourself what you need to do to make your home a safe place to raise a child. Think about your daily routines, like changing diapers, cooking, and driving, and consider ways to make them safer, too.

Things to Discuss with Your Health Professional

- A plan for dealing with medical emergencies, injuries, or poisonings.
- Guidelines for knowing when to go to the emergency room.
- The hospitals and clinics your health professional works with.
- Ways to get in touch with your health professional after office hours.

Physical Activity

During infancy, your baby develops many new physical skills. As she learns to control her body movements, she becomes stronger and more active. Your baby needs lots of opportunities to play with you, with food, and with toys to help her develop these important skills.

Things to Discuss with Your Health Professional

- Questions or concerns about your baby's development.
- Any problems your baby has with physical activities.



You and your health professional form a partnership that will help your baby have a healthy happy start in life.

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