

**Healthy Start,
Grow Smart
Your One-Month-Old**

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You and Your Baby

During the first month of your baby's life, you and your baby spend a lot of time getting to know each other. Your baby will spend most of his time sleeping. You will spend most of your time learning the best way to meet your baby's needs. Sometimes, you may feel tired and nervous. These feelings are a signal that you need to take care of yourself. Here are some ways to do it:

- Make sure you get enough sleep. Take a nap when your baby does. If you can't, try to spend some time relaxing.
- Keep your home as quiet and calm as possible. Turn off your radio and TV. This will help calm your baby.
- Simplify housework. Just do the basics. Older children can help dust, pick up toys, sweep the floor and wash dishes. Dad or other family members can help, too.
- Be sure to eat nutritious food. If you are breastfeeding, avoid alcohol and limit caffeine. Avoid drinking more than two to three cups of coffee a day.
- Simplify your meals. Nutritious salads, soups and sandwiches are quick and easy to prepare.
- Make some time for yourself. Take a hot bath to relax or do some reading. You can look forward to taking a break when you are stressed.
- Enjoy spending time with your baby. You can put your baby in a sling, backpack or stroller and take a walk through a mall or a park. Be sure that your baby is safely secured in these devices. Never leave your baby unattended in a stroller.
- Do something you enjoy. If you breastfeed, you can read while nursing your baby.
- Call a relative or friend if you have questions or when you are feeling stressed. Talking to someone who has had similar experiences and feelings can help you.

One-Month Checkup

Soon after you come home from the hospital, you should call to set up a checkup for your baby. This checkup may take place any time from two to four weeks after your baby is born. If your baby doesn't seem to be doing well before your first appointment, don't wait. Call the doctor or the clinic.

The checkup is a good time for you to ask questions. Before the visit, it is a good idea to write down questions and bring them with you.

You can ask the doctor what to have in the house in case of small accidents or mild illness. Ask what to do if something serious happens. Ask your doctor about what to do if your baby chokes or stops breathing. Knowing this can help you save your baby if he gets into difficulty.

Always keep your doctor's phone number where you can find it. This number should be on a list of emergency phone numbers that you can find quickly.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should also be on your list. If your baby has eaten a harmful substance, call and get help. Be prepared to tell about your baby's symptoms and what has been eaten. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

The one-month checkup helps the doctor see changes in your baby. The doctor can find problems your baby is having. Finding problems now can help prevent more serious problems as your baby grows.

In the first year, your baby will have a number of checkups. At most of them, he will receive shots. Be sure to ask the doctor what reaction your baby might have from the shots.

Your baby may need more testing or he may need to be treated if your doctor finds signs of a possible problem. Your doctor may refer you to another doctor. If so, get a copy of your baby's medical records to take with you. Or ask your doctor to make sure the other doctor will get a copy of them. Be sure you understand why your doctor is recommending more tests or sending your child to another doctor. Write down the doctor's description of the possible problem in words you understand and also have him write out the exact words in "doctor's language" so you can communicate with the next doctor you see.

Your doctor will talk to you about what to expect with your child. The doctor will tell you when your baby needs to come in again.

What happens at the checkup?

- Your doctor will ask you questions. The questions will be about how things are with you and the baby.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's eating habits. He will also ask how often your baby has a wet or dirty diaper.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's sleeping habits.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's behavior and development.
- Your doctor will give your baby a physical exam.
- Your baby's clothes will be taken off.
- He will be weighed. Your baby's length and head size will be measured.
- Your baby's vision and hearing will be tested.
- Your baby's blood will also be tested.

One-Month Checkup: Where To Go

Try to find a doctor you like and trust. It helps if your baby sees the same doctor or nurse every time. That makes it easier to keep track of your baby's needs.

If you don't know where to take your baby for care, call your local health department. The phone number is in the "government" listings of the phone book. You can also ask a local hospital.

Ask a close friend or relative who has children whom she takes her children to for health care. Ask if she really likes her children's doctor and if the doctor is good at taking time to explain things and answer questions.

If you are eligible for Medicaid, your baby can get free checkups. You can call your local social welfare, health or family services office to see if you qualify for Medicaid services.

If you don't have health insurance for your baby, you can learn about resources in your state by calling the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov for more information about free or low-cost health insurance for children. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

One way to notice changes in your baby's health is to keep a record. You can keep a health notebook. Write down your baby's length and weight as he grows. Write down things like your baby's schedule for shots and checkups. Write down dates of illnesses, and describe the symptoms. Ask for a copy of your child's shot record. You will need to have this shot record when your child starts day care, Head Start or school.

The Wonders of the Brain

Your baby is flexible in how he grows and learns. His brain is growing and changing, also. The things your baby sees, hears and does help him to learn and to get interested in the people and things around him.

Your baby's brain has come into the world ready to absorb all sorts of good things. Your baby is learning to be a person. You are learning to be his parent. Learning to pay attention and to respond to each other will help you both.

Since birth, your baby has been taking in information. He learns from what he sees, hears, smells and touches. After babies see or hear something many times, they can remember whether they have seen or heard it before. This is the way they learn.

Your baby's brain grows and changes in important ways every day. The experiences your baby has are important for these changes. Some parts of the brain are most important for learning. Some parts are important for remembering new things. These parts will continue to grow and change as your baby learns new things.

We know that responding to your baby in a loving and attentive way helps him learn. Talk to your baby. Provide him with a variety of experiences that help him explore his world safely.

Feeding Your Baby

Your breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. Breastfeeding is natural. It can be easier than formula feeding. Breast milk helps protect your baby from sickness. Breastfeeding helps your body get back to normal after pregnancy. It may help you lose weight.

Your baby will let you know when he is ready to nurse. He will put his hands toward his mouth. He will make sucking sounds, whimper and bend and unbend his arms and hands. He will move his fist to his mouth. He will nuzzle against your breast. If he doesn't start feeding soon after doing these things, he will start crying. Use these signs instead of a clock to set his feeding times. Feed him before he starts crying. Feed him every two to three hours. It's a good idea to switch breasts in the middle of a feeding.

Your baby will let you know when it is time to stop feeding. He will relax. He will stop sucking the breast. He will refuse to take the breast if you offer it again. Your baby should make soft swallowing sounds while feeding.

Your breast should feel softer after the feeding. Milk may leak from the other breast while feeding.

Women who breastfeed should eat nutritious foods. They should drink lots of water. They should relax during breastfeeding.

You will know your baby is getting plenty to eat if he has at least seven to 10 very wet diapers a day (using regular absorbency diapers). You can expect your baby to have two to three bowel movements every day.

You can breastfeed your baby after you return to work or school. You can breastfeed your baby even if he is in a day-care center. You can breastfeed right before leaving your baby at day care. You can breastfeed right after picking up your baby. If your day care is nearby, you can breastfeed your baby during your lunch break.

You can learn how to pump your milk and store it in a bottle. Your milk is good for about 48 hours in the refrigerator. It lasts two to three months in the freezer. You can leave the bottles with the day-care center to feed your baby when you can't be there.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

If you use infant formula to feed your baby, be sure to follow directions for mixing. He will take two to three ounces of formula every couple of hours. As he grows, he will take more at each feeding. He will also go longer between feedings.

Spitting Up

For infants, spitting up is a normal part of life. Many babies spit up a lot. Most likely this happens because of the way a baby develops.

The muscle that closes the feeding tube from the baby's mouth to his stomach is still developing in infants. It may be weak. As a result, even a tiny burp can cause small amounts of stomach contents to come back up.

If your baby is usually happy and gaining weight, you should not be concerned about his spitting up.

You should see your doctor if your baby:

- is vomiting
- has diarrhea
- has trouble breathing
- has lost weight
- has a loss of appetite

Nearly half of all healthy infants under one year of age spit up two or more times a day.

Talking to Your Baby

Talking and cooing with your baby is one of the best parts of being a new parent. Talking and playing are fun for you and your baby. But it is more than fun. It also helps your baby to learn.

In playing with your baby, it is important that you gently interact with him in a back and forth manner. Smile at your baby and wait for him to focus on your face and smile back. When he smiles, you should smile even wider yourself and nod your head. Let him know you are happy that he smiled back at your smile.

Do this with cooing and babbling too. If your child babbles or coos at you, smile and gently coo back. If he answers you with another coo or babble, answer him back. Do this repeatedly. This is how babies learn to get along with other people and how they learn to have confidence that you are interested in them. When you talk and your baby coos back to you, important things happen. Your baby learns how to talk by hearing your words and trying to make the same sounds.

Your baby learns fast. As you talk softly to your baby and he “talks” back, you begin to know his sounds. When you mimic his sounds, you encourage your baby to try to make more sounds.

Talk with your baby as much as you can. He will learn to know his parents’ voices. This makes the bond between you and your baby stronger.

From the day he is born, your baby is learning. When you talk with your baby, you are helping his brain develop.

- Reading to your baby helps him learn. Reading to him starting in infancy will help him do better in school as he grows older.
- Read aloud to your baby for a few minutes at a time. He will be able to pay attention for only a few minutes at first. Babies like to have things repeated over and over.
- Read, say or sing nursery rhymes to your baby. This will help him learn, too.
- Finding Child Care for Your Baby

Sometimes you must find child care even for young babies. This happens most often when the parents work outside the home. You may have many choices when it comes to choosing child care for your baby. You may have a neighbor or relative who can take care of him. Or, you may decide to use a day-care center or family home.

It’s a good idea to visit several centers or homes before choosing one. Watch how the staff teaches the children. Watch how the children are cared for. If a neighbor or relative cares for your baby, make sure he or she likes your baby. Make sure he or she knows how important it is to keep your baby safe.

Tips on choosing day care

- Always ask to see the center’s or home’s license. To get a license, a center must follow certain rules. Homes also must follow rules to be licensed. The rules cover cleanliness and safety. The rules tell centers and homes to have enough staff to care for the children.
- The center or home should welcome visits by parents at any time. The center or home should be clean and should look nice. The staff should spend time talking and playing with the children. The staff should be gentle but have control over the children.
- After you choose a center or home, be sure to follow the rules set by the center or home. Make sure you pick up your baby on time. Give the center or home your baby’s shot record. Tell the staff about any special needs, such as allergies, that your baby has. If you are breastfeeding, let the staff know that you will come in for feedings or you will provide your breast milk in bottles. The staff should call you right away if your baby seems sick or has a minor accident.

Your baby may be upset at first about staying in a strange place. This is normal. You and the staff can work together to help your baby get used to being in child care. After your baby has settled into a routine, he should become relaxed about going to child care.

Day-care providers to avoid:

- Avoid centers or homes that don't want parents dropping by without notice.
- Avoid centers or homes where you see children left alone.
- Avoid centers or homes where children seem bored or unhappy.
- Avoid centers or homes where staff yell at the children a lot.
- Avoid centers or homes that are dirty or unsafe.

If your friends or relatives care for your baby, go over carefully with them how to make things safe for your baby, especially as he gets older. As a mother, you know to never leave your baby alone, to put him in a safe crib to sleep, to secure him in a stroller and to never shake him. However, sometimes even people who love you and your baby may not know these things. Be sure that they understand how to keep your baby safe and comfortable.

To learn more about child-care options, you can contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

What's It Like To Be One Month Old?

At one month old:

- I like to look at black and white colors and patterns more than at other colors.
- I roll part of the way from my back to my side.
- I keep my hands or fingers slightly open most of the time.
- Sometimes I root around and try to suck, even when I'm not feeding.
- I make some throaty or gurgling sounds.
- I need you to protect the soft spot on the top of my head.
- I cry when I am hungry, wet or tired, or when I want to be held.
- I may smile at you when I see you or hear you.
- I make eye contact with you.
- Loud noises, bright lights or rough handling scare me.
- I'm often fussy in the evenings.
- I turn my head sideways when I'm on my stomach.
- My head wobbles if you don't hold it. I need you to put your hand behind my head and neck.
- I have learned that I will be fed when I am hungry.

Keeping Your Baby's Records

It's important to keep a record of your baby's growth. The record should be written down. It should include medical checkups.

Your baby's length and weight will be measured when he visits the doctor or clinic. The doctor will make notes about your baby's shots. He will also make notes about any illness that your baby has had. You will want to keep records on these things, too. These records help you and your doctor see how your baby is growing.

You can make your own notebook to write down your baby's health record. Some clinics and parenting classes also have booklets you can use. Your local health department may have booklets, too. Write down what happens when your baby goes to the doctor. Also write down what you do for your baby when he is sick at home.

Your doctor keeps good records on your baby's health and shots. You should, too. The records help you and your doctor care for your baby. The doctor needs to know when your baby has been sick. And the doctor needs to know how fast your baby is growing. This information helps the doctor know what kind of medicines (if any) to give your baby. It also helps the doctor know what kind of food your baby needs.

Guidelines To Help Your Baby Every Day

Encourage exploration. Your baby learns about the world by looking at people and objects and touching them. He learns by moving around. Help him learn in familiar places and in new places. Show him how you look at, listen to, touch, smell or handle things.

Be your baby's teacher. In the early years, a lot of important learning happens when you play and talk with your baby. Babies learn from what they see and hear their parents do. They learn by trying to do things with their parents' help.

Communicate. Talk and sing to your baby. He has been learning about language since birth, and this helps him. When he smiles, smile back. A smile is communication, too!

Make sure your baby is safe. Stay in the room with him while he is awake, so you can watch him. It helps to set the room up in a way that lets your baby be comfortable. You should be able to reach him easily. He should be able to move about without hurting himself.

Do things over and over again with your baby. Babies learn by playing the same games or listening to the same books many times. Your baby learns what it means to reach, make sounds or smile when you give him lots of chances to do these things. Be sure to find times to play and talk to your baby when he is rested and alert.

Protect your baby from disapproval, teasing or punishment. Babies depend on their parents to help them learn how to behave. Never let anyone punish your baby. Never let anyone treat your baby harshly. Never let anyone tease him in a rough or uncaring way.

Celebrate with your child. Get excited about the new things your baby does and the sounds he makes. Get excited about little and big things. Make a big deal about the things your baby does. When you do this, he learns that what he does matters and is noticed. This can be as simple as smiling back at your one-month-old when he smiles, or clapping your hands in praise.

Sleeping Patterns

A one-month-old baby may sleep two to three hours between feedings. Sometimes babies this age will sleep as many as five hours at a time at night.

Some babies begin sleeping through the night at a few months of age. Others don't sleep through the night until they are one or two years old or even older. Sometimes babies will sleep through the night for a while and then start waking up again. You can usually let your baby set his own schedule. If he is waking up too much, ask your doctor for advice.

Some babies want to sleep more in the daytime and as a result they wake more often at night. One thing parents can do to change this is to keep the baby awake during the day. Talk to him. Read to him. Play with him gently. Let him grasp your fingers or a toy. Keeping him awake more during the day may help him sleep longer at night.

As babies get older, they usually sleep longer at night. They stay up more during the day. As he grows, you will see changes in your baby's sleep habits.

You want to keep your baby safe when he sleeps. Research shows that babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or crib death. If your baby has a health problem, your doctor may tell you to put him in another position. Otherwise, always put your baby to sleep on his back.

Bowel Habits

You will see changes in your baby's bowel and bladder habits.

Your baby should have seven to 10 wet diapers a day (regular absorbency). This means that he is getting enough fluids.

Many babies may change their bowel habits. They may change from having several bowel movements a day to having fewer than one a day.

Your baby is not constipated if the stool is soft and passes easily.

Baby Powder

Talk with your doctor or nurse about using baby powder on your baby's skin. Baby powder makes your baby smell nice. But your baby may not need baby powder to stay dry.

If you use baby powder, be sure to check the date on the container to make sure it is fresh. Throw away old containers of baby powder you have around the house. Be sure the powder you are using on your baby does not contain harmful things (zinc stearate or asbestos) that used to be put in baby powder.

Don't shake the powder directly on your baby. Shake the powder into your hand and gently pat your baby's skin. Be sure to shake the powder on your hands away from your baby's face. You don't want the baby powder to fill the air around your baby's head. He could breathe the powder in, and he could choke. Or the powder could get into his eyes.

Keep the powder container away from your baby. Don't let him play with it while you change his diaper. Ask your doctor if you have any questions.

Your Baby Has "People Skills"

Your baby is already beginning to show you how he feels. This means that he has ways to tell you when he's happy, sad, excited or even angry. Babies are tuned in to what people do and say to them. So it is important to pay attention to their feelings.

Your baby has been learning how to show you what he feels since he was born. The way you respond to his feelings helps his emotional growth. It also helps him learn to trust and enjoy you and the other people who care for him.

Your baby has been watching your face closely. He is learning to read the look on your face. And he is learning to respond to the look on your face. He is learning also to notice small changes in your voice. By reading and responding to these cues in others, he is learning to care about other people and their feelings.

Your baby has a personality at birth. Research shows some ways to help him develop his emotional and social skills. You can do this by tuning in to your child's behavior. Take an interest in the things that interest him. Try to figure out what your baby is trying to tell you when he laughs, cries or shakes his arms and legs in excitement. It helps your child when you are happy and interested in life, too.

Your baby's ability to think and learn is closely tied to how he is feeling. When he is alert and feeling good, he is more likely to observe, explore and play. He is more likely to learn and remember new things when people pay attention to what he likes. You can help your baby when you show him your love.

Your Baby "Talks" Without Words

The word "infant" comes from Latin. It means "unable to talk." But as you may have noticed, even though your baby cannot talk, he has begun to communicate with you.

- Perhaps you have noticed that when you smile, your baby smiles back. This shows that he likes to have you pay attention to him in this way. It shows that he can pick up on your happy feelings. He is learning to react to people and to communicate what he likes and doesn't like.
- At the same time, he is learning to take turns. Taking turns is an important part of how people communicate with one another.
- Your baby can also express his feelings of discomfort or distress. Pay attention to him when he is fussy. This will teach him that he can communicate to get his needs met.
- Talk to your baby long before he can talk or know the meanings of words. Babies whose parents talk to them learn to talk at an earlier age. They also learn more words. This is true even though different babies learn to understand and say words in different ways.
- Speak more slowly to your baby than you would to an adult. Say some words more softly and others in an excited way. Use a slightly higher pitch. Babies like it when people talk to them this way. It gets your baby's attention because he knows you are talking just to him.
- When you talk to your baby, use just a few words or short sentences that you say over and over again. Babies like to hear people call their names. Babies like to hear people say things that make them smile and laugh. Your baby will enjoy listening to you. Later on, he will enjoy talking to you.

Low-Cost Ways To Pamper Yourself

You have a baby, and that's a big responsibility. But you need to take time for yourself, too. You need to do some things that make you feel good. In turn, this will let you have more fun with your baby.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Have your baby's dad, a friend or a relative watch the baby while you nap.
- Take time for a warm, relaxing bath when your baby is asleep.
- Ask your husband or a friend to give you a shoulder massage when you feel tense.
- Exercise (with your doctor's OK). Exercise can make you feel less tired and better all over.
- Rent a movie you'll enjoy. You can watch it while you nurse your baby.

- Don't answer the phone if you are too tired to talk. If it is important (or sometimes even if it isn't), the person will call back. Or you can install an answering machine.

Doing a few things you enjoy isn't selfish. It is a good way to take care of yourself and your baby.

Teenage Parents Are Not Alone

If you are a teenager, and you just had a baby, you may feel like you're alone. Does anyone understand or care what you are going through? Yes! There are many people and places to go to for help. Here are some places to contact:

- Your local health department can tell you if you are eligible for health programs. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is one. Families who are enrolled in the WIC program can get information on breastfeeding and nutrition at the local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. If you have access to a computer, you may be able to get on the Internet. Schools and public libraries often have computers that you can use. You can visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.
- Local churches, synagogues and mosques may be able to help. Sometimes they can help even if you are not a member.
- Parents Anonymous has groups for teen parents who are upset by their babies. You can call 1-909-621-6184 to find out about groups in your area. You can visit the Parents Anonymous Web site at www.parentsanonymous.org/.
- Your school counselor and school nurse can help you in many ways. They can help you find ways to finish school while you take care of your baby. Your school may also have classes on how to be a good parent. Your school counselor can help you find programs for teen parents in your town.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, bottle feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child-care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Coming Next Month

Crib Safety
Sleeping Better at Night
Protecting Your Baby's Future Teeth
When To Call the Doctor

...and much more!

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On request, this publication is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, audiotape or computer diskette. For more information, please contact the Department's Alternate Format Center (202) 260-9895 or (202) 205-8113.

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