



Parents' Guide to Babies: Pediatric Health and Wellness Topics

Your baby's overall health and wellness involves eating right, staying active, and managing health conditions. But there's more to it than that, too. Need some guidance? Here are some common topics of concern for new parents. Consider discussing any issues with your doctor or nurse.

- [Car Seats & Baby](#)
- [Dental Health & Baby](#)
- [Feeding Your Newborn](#)
- [Playtime & Baby](#)
- [Sun Care & Baby](#)
- [Vaccines & Baby](#)
- [Well-Baby Visits](#)



Car Seats & Baby

Car seats are important to help keep your child safe.

Infants up to 12 months of age should always ride in a rear-facing seat. Look for an infant-only seat that faces the rear of your car and has a harness. There are also convertible seats. These have higher height and weight limits, so you can keep your child in a rear-facing seat for a wider age span.

Here are a few tips for using car seats:

- Pick a car seat based on your baby's age and size.
- Choose a seat that fits in your car.
- Use the car seat every time.
- Follow the instructions that come with the car seat.
- See the car manual on how to install the car seat.
- Check the seat's height and weight limits.

Do you need help?

Call the NHTSA Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or visit [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).



Dental Health & Baby

Take care of baby's gums and teeth. Losing a baby tooth too soon can cause other teeth to shift. New teeth could grow in crooked or crowded.

Baby's first dental visit:

Set up a dental visit when his or her first tooth appears, or no later than your baby's first birthday.

Take care of baby's mouth and teeth:

- Don't give your baby sweetened drinks. Don't dip baby's pacifier in sugar or other sweet foods or drinks. This can cause tooth decay.
- Clean your baby's mouth by wiping her or his gums with a clean washcloth.
- Gently brush baby's teeth with an infant-size toothbrush and water.
- You can begin to floss your baby's teeth when baby has 2 teeth that touch.

Questions? Ask your family dentist.



Feeding Your Newborn

Your baby depends on you for everything, especially feeding.

Watch your newborn for signs of hunger. Baby may:

- Start sucking
- Put hands to mouth
- Open their mouths

Most newborns will take breast milk or about 2 or 3 ounces of formula every 2 to 3 hours. It is OK if the baby does not finish a bottle. If you are breastfeeding, the baby will stop sucking and may fall asleep when full.

With regular feeding, babies have about 6 to 8 wet diapers and 3 to 4 stools a day. Babies should be back to their birth weight by about 2 weeks of age.

Questions? Ask your child's health care provider.



Playtime & Baby

Babies first start to play with their own hands and toes when they're 1 to 3 months old.

You can do simple things together. Try clapping hands, playing pat-a-cake, and pointing to things. For example, you can say, "Where's your nose?" Then gently touch baby's nose and say, "There's your nose!"

Here are tips for helping your little one be active:

- Turn off the TV. Babies should not watch TV until they are 2 years old.
- Provide safe toys that your baby can look at, roll, or grab that will make activity time fun.
- Spend time having fun together. Try reading aloud, singing, dancing, and repeating the noises baby makes.
- Go outside for a walk together around your house, or head to the park or zoo.

Questions? Ask your child's health care provider.



Sun Care & Baby

Did you know that just 1 blistering sunburn can increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life?

Your baby's best defense against sunburn is avoiding the sun or staying in the shade.

Dress your baby in:

- Lightweight clothes that have a tight weave
- A brimmed hat that shades his or her face and head

Apply sunscreen:

- Sunscreen can help protect babies age 6 months and older.
- Use one that won't irritate baby's skin and that has an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Keep the sunscreen away from baby's hands and eyes.
- Apply 30 minutes before exposure for the best protection.

Questions? Ask your child's health care provider.

SPF=Sun Protection Factor



Vaccines & Baby

Your baby may get many vaccines in the first year of life.

Vaccines are given at certain ages to help prevent diseases. There is a recommended schedule for childhood vaccination. Here are some questions to ask the health care provider about your baby's first vaccines:

- What vaccines will my child get?
- What diseases do the vaccines help prevent?
- What are the possible side effects of the vaccines, and what do I do if any occur?
- What are the risks?
- When does my child need to come back for more vaccines?

Also, ask the health care provider's office for a record of your baby's vaccines. You may need this record for day care, camps, and other things when your child gets older.

Questions? Ask your child's health care provider.



Well-Baby Visits

Take your new baby to see the health care provider, even if he or she is not sick.

Well visits usually take place at 1 month and then every 2 months during baby's first 6 months. The next visits take place at 9 and 12 months. Ask your health care provider when to set up these visits.

Your baby will be weighed and measured. Your baby may get a physical exam and shots at certain visits.

Ask questions at the well visits. You can learn about your baby's:

- growth
- feeding and sleeping habits

Be sure you know how to reach the health care provider's office or clinic between well visits. Call right away if your baby has diarrhea, yellow skin, a fever, will not eat, or has a noticeable reduction of urine output (fewer than 6 wet diapers in 24 hours).

Questions? Call your child's health care provider.