

# HEALTHY GUIDELINES

## HELPING YOUR BABY GROW

Birth to nine months

This booklet was adapted from Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents. Bright Futures was published by the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health and was supported by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the Medicaid Bureau.

Information in these guidelines is not intended as medical advice from Pfizer Inc. This information only provides help in establishing guidelines for preventive care. Always consult a physician or other medical healthcare professional for advice on illness or injury.

## Helping Your Baby Grow Birth to nine months

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

The birth of a child is one of the most exciting times in a person's life. Sometimes it can also be a time of anxiety. It's normal to have a lot of questions, like "What should I do if....?" and "When should I.....?"

The most dramatic growth of a child's life occurs during infancy. By age one, infants triple their birth weight, add almost 50 percent to their length, and achieve most of their brain growth. Healthy babies also receive the recommended immunizations during this time.

Helping Your Baby Grow can help you care for your baby during your baby's first nine months. It covers what your baby will eat, how he will develop, and what shots he will need. It can also help you prevent injury and illness and learn when you need help. We call it "well-baby care."

## BEFORE YOUR BABY IS BORN

### HEALTHY HABITS

During the months before your baby is born, your own health as an expectant mother is extremely important to the health of your baby. Get regular checkups, eat healthy foods, and don't smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs. These are the most important things you can do for you and your baby.

It is also important to think about and talk with your partner, your family, and friends about ways to handle all the changes in your life that will come after the baby is born.

Other habits to keep you and your baby healthy:

- Keep you doctor appointments before your baby is born
- Have a dental checkup
- Attend childbirth classes
- Learn emergency first-aid for babies
- Obtain an infant car seat; learn how to install it properly in the back seat of your vehicle
- Install smoke detectors in your home
- Keep your home and car smoke free
- Set your hot water thermostat to 120°F

Don't hesitate to ask for help or information from your doctor or other healthcare professional.

### SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- Is breast-feeding healthier for the baby?
- How should I prepare myself to breast-feed?

### OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## NEWBORN

### YOUR NEWBORN

Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

The next few weeks will be very exciting as you get to know your new baby, and they can also be exhausting. It's important to remember that all babies are different and as you care for your baby, you will gradually learn what works best for her.

All newborn babies are fragile and need special handling. Your baby's muscles are not well developed at this stage. When you lift and hold your baby, be sure to support her neck and head. Hold the baby gently but firmly.

As a new mother, you will also need plenty of rest, lots of fluids, and time to eat as you recover from childbirth and learn to care for your new baby. Ask for the help you need from your partner, family, friends, or healthcare provider. Let go of less important tasks, and try to enjoy this special time.

### HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Use your wrist to test the baby's bath temperature; make sure the water is warm to the touch but not hot
- Put your baby to sleep on her back
- Be sure the crib is safe. The slats should be no more than 2-3/8" apart, and the mattress should be firm and fit snugly in the crib
- Don't drink hot drinks or smoke while holding your baby
- Keep your home and car smoke free
- Ask your healthcare provider to tell you the signs of fever, jaundice (yellowish color to her skin or the whites of her eyes), and when skin rashes may need attention
- Always use an infant car seat safely secured in the back seat of your car
- Try to rest when the baby sleeps. Let others help you or save less important tasks until the baby is older

## NUTRITION

Feed your baby often, until she seems content. Newborn babies need to eat eight or more times a day. Feed your baby only breast milk or formula until she is at least 4 months old.

If you have decided to breast-feed, you should know that for a few days after your baby is born your breasts will produce something called colostrum. This is a yellowish liquid that is rich in vitamins, minerals, and protein, and is very healthy for your baby. After about 3 days, your body will start to produce breast milk. Your breasts may feel hard and your nipples tender. Your healthcare provider may have ideas to make you and your baby more comfortable.

When you are breast-feeding, remember that your baby will be eating whatever you eat. Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of fluids, don't smoke, don't drink alcohol, and don't use drugs.

If you are bottle feeding, be sure your formula includes iron. Most baby formulas have all of the other vitamins and minerals a newborn needs to grow.

Keep bottles and nipples very clean. The formula should be warm to the touch but not hot. Do not use a microwave to heat it.

### SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- What do I do when the baby cries?
- How do I know if the baby is sick? When should I call you? When should I call 911?
- How do I care for my baby's cord?
- What do I do if the baby's skin looks yellow?

### OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## ONE WEEK

### MAJOR CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE

The first week of your baby's life has brought major changes to your life. This is an exciting time as you learn what works to comfort your baby and what doesn't. At the same time, you may be exhausted and overwhelmed as you try to heal from childbirth and care for your baby. Save your energy and rest when the baby is sleeping. Ask for the help you need from your partner, family, friends, or healthcare provider. Let go of less important tasks, and cuddle and talk to your baby.

### HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Put your baby to sleep on his back
- Always use an infant car seat safely secured in the back seat of your car
- Test bath water temperature. Be sure it is warm to the touch but not hot
- Know the signs of illness: fever, failure to eat, vomiting, diarrhea (which can cause the baby to lose dangerous amounts of water), irritability, skin rash, jaundice (yellowish color to the skin or the whites of the eyes)
- Clean the umbilical cord with rubbing alcohol. Report unusual redness, pus, or obvious infection to your doctor immediately
- Never leave the baby alone with a young child or pet

### NUTRITION

Feed the baby when he seems hungry, day and night. For the first 4 months, this may mean 8-12 times a day. Let the baby determine the length of the feeding. If breast-feeding, the baby may suck 10-20 minutes per breast. If using formula, throw out any formula left in the bottle when the baby seems content. Burp the baby midway, at a natural break in the feeding. The baby is getting enough milk if he is having 6-8 wet diapers a day and is growing well.

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- Should I feed my baby every time he cries?
- How do I know when my baby has eaten enough?
- Why am I feeling so tired and blue?
- Should I use a pacifier to soothe my baby?
- Is spitting up normal?

## OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## ONE MONTH

### WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING

As you are learning to care for your baby, your baby is learning about you. Your baby responds to sounds by blinking, crying, getting quiet, or changing her breathing pattern. Your baby is learning to look at faces, follow you with her eyes, and recognize your voice and face. Some babies have learned to calm down when held or rocked, but others cry a lot at this age, either from colic (irritability caused by such things as swallowing air) or just evening fussiness. Your baby is getting stronger, and when she is lying on her stomach, she may even lift her head for a moment.

If you have older children, give them simple tasks to “help” you with the baby and try to give each child some special attention.

### HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Always use an infant car seat in the back seat of your car. Never put a car seat in the front seat
- Keep one hand on your baby when she is on a high surface, and never leave your baby alone with a young child or pet
- Keep your home and car smoke-free
- Keep hot liquids away from the baby, and be sure bath water is warm to the touch but not hot

- Know the signs of illness: fever, failure to eat, vomiting, diarrhea (which can cause the baby to lose dangerous amounts of water), irritability, skin rash, jaundice (yellowish color to the skin or the whites of the eyes)
- Put your baby to sleep on her back

## NUTRITION

Your baby still only needs breast milk or formula. Juice, cow's milk, and baby cereal are too hard for your baby to digest now.

Babies have times when they grow very fast, so you may need to feed your baby more often during a growth spurt.

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- How much should my baby weigh?
- Why does she get fussy at the end of every day? Does she have colic?
- How can I calm her down?
- How long will my baby sleep between feedings?

## OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## TWO MONTHS

### WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING

Your baby is becoming more active every day. He coos and babbles now, often in response to you. Over the next few months, he will begin to smile when you approach and show pleasure in your company. Talk to your baby, and cuddle with him as much as possible.

When you lay him on his stomach, he will lift his head for several seconds, resting on his hands and arms. He also has more control of his head and neck when he is in an upright position, but still needs

your support when you hold him. Give him colorful things to look at, and sing to him.

Caring for your baby takes a lot of energy, but you also need to take care of yourself. Nap when you can, and take time for yourself and your partner. Mothers need a checkup to ensure their body is healing well.

## HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Put your baby to sleep on his back
- Bath water should be warm to the touch but not hot. Keep your hot water thermostat at 120°F
- Maintain a smoke-free home and car
- Keep small and sharp objects and plastic bags out of reach
- Protect your baby from too much sun. A baby's skin can easily burn
- Keep one hand on your baby when he is on a high surface, and never leave your baby alone with a young child or pet

## NUTRITION

Your baby still needs to be fed every 2 or 3 hours. Until he is 12 months old, breast milk or iron-fortified formula will be his main source of nutrition. Do not feed your baby honey until after the first year because it can cause infant botulism (a type of food poisoning). Over the next few months, as the baby is becoming more aware of the world, feeding may get more difficult. If the baby pulls off your breast or bottle often during feeding, try feeding in a quiet, darkened room.

If you are using formula, always hold the baby when you are feeding him. Propping the bottle or putting the baby to bed with a bottle to calm him can create a habit that damages his teeth when they come in.

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- I'm still feeling blue. When will this go away?
- My 3 year old clings to me again. What should I do?
- How can I get my baby to sleep through the night?

## OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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### FOUR TO FIVE MONTHS

#### WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING

Your baby may laugh and squeal now and is excited by her new abilities. She can respond when you approach her or when other sights and sounds excite her. Show her new things, and talk to her while dressing, bathing, playing, walking, and driving. Try playing peek-a-boo, reading books, and playing music. Be sure she can't reach any small objects, such as marbles, and don't give her balloons or plastic bags.

#### HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Remember to always keep one hand on the baby when she is on a high surface, and never leave her alone with a young child or pet
- In preparation for the next few years, childproof your home. (Keep these out of reach: hot liquids, knives, cigarettes, alcohol, matches, poisons, medications, outlets, cords, guns, small and sharp objects, plastic bags.) Put latches on all cabinets that can be reached by a crawling baby
- Keep syrup of Ipecac on hand. If your baby swallows cleaning supplies, other poisons, or too much medicine, call the poison control center or your doctor to find out if and how to use Ipecac to make your baby vomit

#### NUTRITION

Some time between 4 and 6 months, you can start feeding baby food to your baby. If your baby stays sitting when placed and moves her mouth, tongue and lower jaw independently, she may be ready to try. Use a small spoon to offer a little bit of rice cereal mixed with formula or breast milk. Some babies take a while to learn to swallow food fed from a spoon and may not show much interest for a few weeks.

Others gulp the food down and eagerly watch their parents eat. Only add one new food each week and watch for bad reactions such as gas pains or rash that may indicate an allergy. Don't worry about getting your baby to eat. Over the next several months, the main purpose of feeding solids is to teach your baby how to eat from a spoon and how different foods taste. Most of her nutrition will still come from breast milk or formula.

### SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- She drools all the time. Does this mean she is teething?
- What can I give her when she fusses and cries and nothing seems to calm her down?
- Should my baby be sleeping through the night?

### OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS

### WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING

Six months can be a joyous age, for your baby is full of excitement about his world, and he tries to communicate with you by smiling, frowning, and babbling. Talk to him, read, and sing, encouraging his babbling. Social games like peek-a-boo can be especially fun. Over the next few months, he may begin to get anxious around strangers.

Establish a bedtime routine, including putting your baby to bed awake to help him learn to console himself. Sometimes a special stuffed animal or blanket can help him console himself in new situations or at bedtime.

Your baby will also become more mobile over the next several months, learning to roll and crawl. It's a good idea for you to get down at your baby's level and look around to be sure nothing dangerous is within his grasp. When he gets into things he shouldn't, distract him.

## HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- To protect your baby's teeth, do not put him to bed with a bottle
- Check for hazards at baby's level
- Don't leave buckets of water within the baby's reach. He could fall into the water and drown
- Childproof your home; install stair gates and window guards
- Protect your baby from too much sun. A baby's skin can easily burn

## NUTRITION

Although solids have become important, they're still not as important as breast milk and formula. Gradually give your baby new flavors and textures of baby food. Over the next few months, as he learns to munch, offer soft table food such as mashed potatoes, tuna, or ground meat. You can also begin to offer small amounts of juice mixed with water in a cup. Don't give him foods that can easily cause choking, like peanuts, popcorn, whole grapes, raisins, or carrot sticks. Also do not give your baby honey until after the first year because it can cause infant botulism (a type of food poisoning).

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:

- Does my baby need both a morning and an afternoon nap?
- How can I get my baby to sleep through the night?
- The baby says "Dada" and "Mama." Should he be trying to say other words now?
- Two teeth are starting to come in. Does the baby need to take fluoride? How should I clean his teeth?
- I have to go back to work. What should I look for in day care?

## OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES

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## NINE MONTHS

### WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING

Your baby is using her entire body to communicate. If she sees something she likes, she will crawl toward it. She may be trying to stand, and she will try to walk over the next few months. Along with this mobility comes new opinions. She may protest if you leave the room or give her new foods. She will test you by reaching for things you've taken away from her. Continue to use distraction and a firm voice for discipline.

At this stage your baby wants to find out how things work. She will push on a toy truck to make the wheels turn and shake a rattle to make noise. She may examine the toy closely, turning it upside down. She'll push the toy ahead of her and crawl up to it, testing out her space. It continues to be important to childproof your house and secure cabinets, drawers, and cupboards.

### HEALTHY HABITS -- INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

- Check for hazards within baby's reach
- Keep syrup of Ipecac on hand. If your baby swallows cleaning supplies, other poisons, or too much medicine, call the poison control center or your doctor to find out if and how to use Ipecac to make your baby vomit
- Brush her teeth twice a day
- Do not use an infant walker at any age; they can cause bad falls
- To protect your baby's teeth, do not put her to bed with a bottle

### NUTRITION

At this stage, your baby may not take food from you any longer. She may insist on feeding herself, smearing food over her table, and even throwing her food to the floor. Give her a few pieces of finger food, and allow her to eat by herself. Let her make her own choices and do all of her own feeding if she insists, but don't leave her alone while she eats. She should still be closely watched to prevent choking.

Continue to bottle- or breast-feed, and be sure that your baby is getting the vitamin and mineral supplements your doctor prescribes.

Help your baby learn to use a cup by giving her small amounts of juice or water in it.

**SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR OTHER  
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL:**

- She doesn't listen when I tell her no. What should I do?
- What should I do when she cries in the middle of the night?
- My child clings to me when anyone new comes up to us. How can I make her more comfortable around strangers?

**OTHER QUESTIONS/NOTES**

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