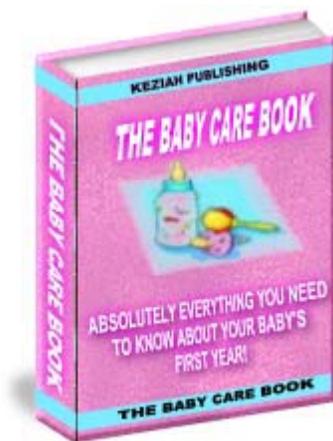


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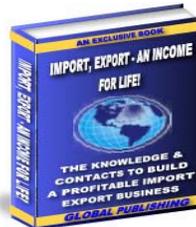
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Introduction

If someone asked me to name one miracle that exists on this earth, I would say the miracle of bringing a life onto this earth. I did not know how beautiful it was till I saw my own sister go through the entire process of pregnancy and giving birth to this angel that brought happiness to our lives. Being a parent is the hardest thing to do in this world and I congratulate you on being one. In this hard but wonderful journey of raising a baby we could do with all the help we could get. One reason why I decided to write a book on this topic is that seeing how important it is to take care of small details when you have a new born in your laps, I thought a book like this would really help parents with small problems that may arise with the baby. I know how hard it is when you have a baby and you don't have your mother around to help you with your questions, I hope my book will help answer those little questions.

In the **Baby Care Book** you will learn the following:

- **The things that a new mother can expect in the days following child birth.**
- **How to cope with depression that a new mother may feel after giving birth.**
- **How to breast feed your baby.**
- **How to bathe your baby properly.**
- **Reasons why your baby will cry.**
- **How to get your baby to have a nice night's sleep.**

- How To choose a paediatrician for your baby.
- How you can use music to soothe your baby.
- What foods your baby should eat at various stages of his first year.
- What kinds of noises your baby will make (and what they may mean).
- The kinds of movements your baby will make before learning how to walk.
- How to help your baby develop her motor and coordination skills.
- How to help your baby socialise from a very young age.
- The process of teething and the things you can do to make it less painful for your new bundle of joy.
- Important considerations about vaccinations and which ones you should consider getting for your baby.
- Common baby illnesses including colds.
- The different play-things that you can give your child at various stages of her development.

This information product will help you to make the most out of your baby's first year by giving you some basic guidelines and milestones to measure against. There is so much information out there for new parents that sometimes less information is better. You will have to determine what works best for you and your baby.

How To Choose A Pediatrician For Your Baby

Caring for your child will naturally be one of your biggest concerns. There are more tips on immunization and care in the first year in future chapters, but right now let us talk a little about how you can choose a good paediatrician for your baby. Here is what to look out for when choosing your paediatrician:

- Find a doctor who has a nice personality and communication style. Finding a doctor that is patient and listens to all your concerns is very important. Try and start the search for selecting your paediatrician ahead of your baby's birth.
- Ensure that that paediatrician's office has a good staff - remember that your baby will spend time with nurses, medical assistants, and other support staff. When going to the office see how the place is - the atmosphere and way staff dress can be indicators of the type of place it is.
- Does he/she come recommended? One of the best ways of finding a good paediatrician is by talking to someone who has had first hand experience. Do you have close family or friends who have used a good paediatrician?
- The location of the office may also be a factor - we live in busy and stressed times so if time is a factor make sure that the paediatrician's office is fairly close by.

- Ask Questions - this is the only way that you can “feel out” prospective doctors and see if their philosophies closely mirror your own.

Mom - What To Expect

Your first baby can be a daunting thought - not all the preparation in the world can probably ease the anxiety that can be felt but if it is any help even doctors and paediatricians get overwhelmed when they bring their firstborn home from the hospital.

Before we go onto the topic of caring for your baby we will talk a little bit about what the mother can come to expect the day after labour. First, the mother will probably expect an all-over pain derived from the stresses of labour. The arms and legs are likely to be sore. One point to note is that although aching legs are normal it would be prudent to go to your doctor if you get symptoms of tenderness, warmth or pain in the calves - this can include swollen or red veins. This is important as these symptoms could indicate thrombophlebitis - a condition when veins become inflamed due to blood clots. Pregnant women are more at risk to this condition because the vein walls tend to relax a little during the pregnancy. You can greatly reduce the chances of thrombophlebitis by walking soon after your delivery.

Other symptoms of pregnancy include stretch marks (which usually fade a few months after the birth, darkened areas of skin (the linea nigra and areola are common), and a line running from the belly button to the pubic bone. You

may also notice some hair loss about 3 months after birth - this is due to the change in the level of hormones and can be expected to stop within a couple of months after starting. Now that we are aware of a few of the common issues that mothers face immediately after childbirth, lets go on to caring for your new baby.

First Days at Home

The first few days home from the hospital are important for both baby and parents. As parents you will have gone through n intense birth process that is unlike anything else you have ever experienced. As a new mother you will be drained - both emotionally and physically. The father can often have feelings of being overwhelmed by the huge responsibility he now faces. There probably is not much anyone can say or do to help you to fully prepare for what you are about to experience.

During your first days at home it may be wise to limit the amount of visitors that you welcome into your home because you'll need a lot of time to recover from the birth process. Other than your immediate family and good friends you might want to ask other friends to wait a week or two before they descend on you with gifts and wanting to hold the new baby.

New mothers will want to pay attention to the way that they feel so that those "baby blues" don't creep up and surprise you unexpectedly. It is normal to feel a bit out of sorts and sad for the first couple of weeks after giving birth. Your body is going through some major physical changes after the birth of your

baby. Your hormones will be changing and you likely will be feeling a lack of sleep. It is important to remember that this is natural and to allow yourself a good amount of time to recover from this. If you find yourself feeling more and more depressed it is advised that you should discuss it with your doctor to see if you are suffering from “*postpartum depression*”. Symptoms of postpartum depression include:

- Overwhelming feelings of sadness and depression accompanied by crying.
- Having little or no energy.
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness.
- Having no interest in your baby or being overly concerned and worried about your baby.
- Weight gain accompanied with overeating or Weight loss accompanied by not eating.
- Insomnia or oversleeping.

If you do have postpartum depression then there are a few ways that you can try to beat it:

- Try and get as much rest and relaxation as possible. When the baby is asleep use this quiet time to get some rest yourself.
- Be more understanding with yourself and do not put yourself under too much pressure to “get back to normal”. Ensure that

your family is aware that you need help with housework and so on.

- Try to limit the time that you spend just alone - keep your mind and body relatively active (for example by taking short pleasant walks).
- Get professional help if the depression seems to be ongoing.
- Discuss with other mothers their experiences after birth. You may find that your friends and family members also went through the same issues as you.

During the first few days at home your family will be adjusting to the additional member of your family. If you have other children at home you may be dealing with feelings of jealousy as the new baby takes centre stage. Make sure that you include your other children in the day-to-day activities that are part of the new baby's routine. Remember that you are trying to adjust to some huge changes in your life so allow yourself the understanding and care that you would give to family and friends in your situation.

Breast Feeding

It is a myth that bottle-feeds and breast-feeding is equally good. Mother's milk is the best for proper growth of the child. There are certain nutrients in the mother's milk that helps the baby fight illnesses while also

promoting brain development. As compared to breast fed babies, the formula-fed babies are more prone to illnesses.

Ideally you should start breast feeding the child within 2 hours of its birth, but do not worry if for some reason you are not able to do so - many mothers feed their children after a few days because of some medical reasons and they turn out to be just fine. Apart from milk avoid giving the child any water or pacifier because the child is still learning to breast-feed and things like the bottle nipple and pacifiers can confuse the baby while nursing because milk doesn't flow as fast as it does through bottles.

Do give the child enough time to breast-feed. Don't limit the time. It could frustrate the baby. An average of about 10 to 45 minutes can be taken by the baby to completely satisfy itself.

So how should you hold your baby during breast feeding? The answer to this is that see to it that the gums of the baby are on top of the areola because there is a chance of nipples becoming sore if the baby just chews on the nipple instead of taking in the areola. You can hold the baby in a cuddling position and feed it or you can lie on your side placing your baby facing you. Usually when the baby has had enough milk it will let go of the nipple on its own, but the baby takes usually half an hour on each side.

What A Mother Should Eat During BreastFeeding

It is very important for a breastfeeding mother to have a healthy and balanced diet. A variety of foods are required during this period including:

- Get lots of vegetables and fruits - try and have an intake of 5 portions a day of fruit and veg.
- For additional energy try and take in starch rich foods such as bread, pasta, potatoes, pulses and rice - this will provide a good source of energy.
- Foods such as wholemeal bread, vegetables, pulses, cereals and pastas will provide fibre - women occasionally experience bowel problems after childbirth and an intake of fibre on a daily basis will help with this.
- Proteins such as lean meat, fish, eggs and poultry.
- Try and get two portions of fish per week (including some oily fish). Do not exceed 2 portions of oily fish per week.
- Dairies such as cheese, milk and yoghurt are an excellent source of calcium and should be included in a breast feeding mother's diet.
- Some doctors advise taking vitamin supplements such as Vitamin D (10 mcg per day). Your doctor will be able to advise which supplements will be right for you.

In addition to the foods that you should eat above there are certain food types that you should steer clear of at this time. As above you should restrict your intake of oily fish to two portions per week but you should also avoid eating more than one portion of swordfish, marlin or shark per week as these fish contain high levels of mercury. You should also be

careful with your intake of caffeine and alcohol. It is true that some breast feeding babies react to the foods that their mother has consumed. Some doctors believe that it is wise to lay off peanuts during this stage as well - approximately 2% of the population is allergic to peanuts - however your baby may have a higher chance of being allergic if the mother/father/brothers/sisters have problems such as asthma, eczema or hayfever. If you believe your baby may be at risk due to these factors it is worth consulting your doctor.

Bathing

Too much bathing may dry the babies skin, so bathe the child 3 times a week and thoroughly clean the diaper area every time you change the baby's diaper.

Sponge baths are recommended for babies in their first 2 weeks. It's best to clean the baby gently with a damp cloth and mild lukewarm soapy water. While giving a sponge bath the baby can be kept in a towel, exposing only those parts that are being cleansed. Try and avoid using soap on the baby's face.

After 2 weeks or so your baby is ready for his first bath. Fill a basin with luke warm water. Undress the baby and gently help him to sit down in the basin while holding him constantly. See to it that her head and upper body is well above the water level. Then gently clean with a damp cloth. You can pour water over his body using a small mug. Shampoo her hair once a week

and when washing her hair, make sure that the soap doesn't go into the eyes, but don't panic if it does - Just clean the baby's eyes with a clean damp cloth.

Diaper Changing

The things you would need for your baby's changing are:

Diapers

Diaper changing tables

Mild baby powder

Diaper rash ointments

Cotton balls

Baby wash cloths

Changing pads

Terry cloth towels

Baby wipe warmers.

You can use either cloth diapers or plastic ones. Usually for newborns cloth diapers should be used.

Lay a fresh diaper on the changing table. Put your baby on the table with her tummy facing you. Then unfasten the soiled diaper and gently pull it out from beneath the baby while slightly raising the baby's legs.

Clean your baby's genitals and buttocks gently with baby wipes or cotton balls dipped in luke warm water. Then thoroughly dry up the area. You can apply mild baby cream and cornstarch powder if wanted.

Then pull the clean diaper underneath the baby and properly fasten the tabs of the diaper.

Most of the babies do get diaper rash at some point; do not be afraid or tense as it is very common in babies and will usually clear up soon. If your baby gets diaper rash on the genitals or on her buttocks or thighs, make sure you change her very often and that every time you do the area is cleansed properly. Rash cream may be applied where appropriate. It might be good to leave the baby without the diaper as often as possible as this helps in keeping baby's skin dry and helps heal the rash faster.

Why is My Child Crying?

Your child could be crying because of a number of reasons, the most common of them is hunger. The other reason is indigestion or colic pain. Gripe water is often a good solution for mild colic pain. Usually babies swallow some air while feeding which makes them uncomfortable and therefore they cry. So after every feed it is good to carry the baby upright and pat on his back gently till it burps. Below are a few more of the common causes of crying and how to deal with them:

- **Lack of comfort** - a soiled nappy, tight or irritable clothing can cause crying in some babies. Ensure that your baby's nappy is always clean and discover what clothing is most comfortable for her.

- Sudden temperature changes - some babies may cry when exposed to temperature changes, for example while bathing or having their nappies changed.
- Lack of attention - some babies will cry when they feel the need for reassurance. There is a need here to find the right balance (for example if you cuddle your baby when she cries at the dead of night she may come to expect this night after nights).

Now that you know a few of the things that can cause your baby to cry let us go on and see how we can give her (and you) a beautiful nights sleep.

How To Give Your Baby A Nice Nights Sleep

When a baby is born she does not know what is night and what is day. In case you are reading this book in anticipation of your first child then (as if you didn't already know) you should expect to be woken up persistently, no matter what the time, for the first few weeks. Partly, this is due to the fact that a baby's stomach carries a maximum of three to four hours worth of nutrition. Hence every few hours she will be waking up and crying. Without wanting to sound cruel, you should whenever possible try and impose the fact that night is for sleep from very early on - this does not mean letting her cry when she needs attention but doing things in a way that gives her less attention than she would expect in the daytime (e.g. try and keep the lights off for instance.) You can also try and make her nap a little less in the afternoon time as this will naturally tire her out more during the night time and help her sleep better.

Here are some very effective tips on helping your baby sleep far better. Did you know that for a lot of adults with persistent sleep problems stem from the early development years of a child's life? Hence it is important for your child to associate sleep with a sense of restfulness and peace - and you can help create those conditions. Here are the tips that you can use to induce far better sleep for your baby:

- When your baby naps in the day time use a well lit area - this will help keep the naps shorter and may encourage him to sleep better at nights.
- Feed your baby more during the day - this will help him meet his needs during the night so that he is likely to sleep better.
- Carry your baby more, particularly in the evenings as this keeps him relaxed which is likely to lead to a more restless transition to sleep.
- Remain flexible - if the sleep routine you are trying does not seem to be working then do not be afraid to try something new. Be alert too - where do you notice your baby sleeping well? If there is a "special place" then try and make that her sleeping place.
- Try and ensure your baby has a pleasant day - as odd as it may sound, the more peaceful your baby's day the greater the chance that your baby will also enjoy a good night's sleep. Some research shows that babies that are held more during the day sleep better at night - is there any way you can work this into your daily routine?

- Depending on the baby, sometimes a warm bath and massage can lull babies into sleep at night. You do need to see if this is right for her as this method can actually make some babies more stimulated. Trial and error is the way to find out.
- A blend of soothing stimuli can help your baby sleep better too. For instance after a warm bath and massage, hugging your baby and then breastfeeding her is very soothing and can help bring the onset of sleep.
- What your baby wears during sleep can also be a factor - babies in the early months are known to prefer sleeping slightly tighter (snugly wrapped in a nice baby blanket). If your baby is prone to allergies it may irritate her more during the night - when this is the case remember to use pure cotton sleepwear.
- Try and minimise the chances for physical discomforts. Things such as having a peaceful and quiet environment, ensuring that her diapers are dry and comfortable and making sure that the air is free or irritants are very important.
- The room temperature can also have a significant impact on your baby's sleep. Apart from ensuring that the bed is suitably warm the best temperature for sleep is 70 degrees with a 50% humidity.

You also need to decide exactly where your baby should be sleeping. Some parents insist that your baby sleep in his own crib in his own room. Still

other parents want their baby in their bedroom. Neither is right or wrong and there are advantages to both. If your baby sleeps in her room you will likely get more rest for yourself since you won't be disturbed by the snufflings and other sleeping noises that newborn babies make. Your baby may wake less often if she is in her own room but this is not always the case. If your baby is sleeping in the same room as you are, you might find it less disturbing and easy to be able to attend to your baby's needs right there. If you not only have your baby in the same room as you but also in the same bed, you should be aware of some of the dangers of sleeping in the same bed together. Baby experts are completely divided over the issue of sharing the same bed with your baby. You will have to research the safety versus the emotional issues and decide for yourself if you are going to be bringing your baby into bed with you.

You will likely need more sleep than your new baby. New babies most often are not able to sleep through the night until they have at least doubled their weight. This usually happens when your baby is between four and five months old. The following table shows the amount of sleep that babies should be getting. Keep in mind that this is just a guideline and don't be discouraged if your baby doesn't fall within the norm.

Baby's Age (Days)	Hours Sleep Per Day (including naps)
1-15 days	16-22
3 weeks	16-18
6 weeks	15-16
4-6 months	14-16
9 months	13-16
1 year	12-15

Once you have decided how you are going to handle where your baby sleeps and just how much sleep the charts say she should have, you will want to think about getting into some sort of a routine whether or not she is going to sleep any better because of it or not. A sleep routine can be a soothing and comforting part of your baby's night time ritual. It is a way for you and your family to incorporate sleep into the daily routine without it becoming a battle of mind over baby. As your baby grows she will understand that bedtime comes

after bath time and may start to settle down if she is comforted by the bedtime routine.

If you cuddle your baby, lay down with him, or sing to him one more time after you have put him to bed, he will come to expect that anytime he isn't ready for sleep all he has to do is fuss and the pleasure of being rocked will be his again. You are not trying to play a game of control with him or deny him your affection after he has been put into bed. After all, it's normal for him to want to be with you. What you *are* trying to do is make him understand that after the bedtime routine is complete, it *is* time to sleep.

A quick note on nighttime feedings, which will be further discussed in the *Milk to Solids* chapter. If you are feeding your baby during the night you won't be able to establish that bedtime routine. If your baby needs to have a feeding at night you may have to delay a good sleeping pattern until he is ready to stop feeding during the night. Most babies stop feeding during the night around five to six months.

Next we have to discuss the hotly debated topic of the baby's sleeping position. It is worth seeing your family doctor for advice on this as there seems to be no one agreement for what a baby's sleep position should be. Initially, it was thought that placing a baby on her stomach was the best position as it was thought to prevent aspiration (which is when food is sucked into the windpipe).

Recent studies seem to now indicate that the back is a better position as it is thought to reduce the chances of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). In addition, an infant placed on her back is also able to breathe better. Again, it is worth visiting your family doctor or paediatrician for further discussion of this matter.

It's also recommended that you refrain from placing your baby on soft bedding items such as pillows and quilts. The reason is that her breathing passage may become obstructed if her face is deep into a pillow or quilt - the safest thing to do is use a good brand of crib and check that the mattress is firm.

There are further issues that could be covered under the "sleep" topic but over time you will derive your own nighttime rules and routines by trial and error. As your baby grows older you will find that his sleep patterns are constantly changing. What you will have established with the use of baths and lullabies are certain characteristics that can be adapted to whatever nighttime routine you come up with to fit to your baby's age and needs. With a lot of patience and love you will be able to make it through the ever-changing world of baby's sleep.

How To Use Music And Lullabies To Improve Your Baby's

Mood

Can music really help to soothe your baby? The answer is a big YES. Does music soothe you? Chances are that it does, and similarly it has the same effect on babies.

There are certain distinct sounds that have been proven to calm even fussy babies: the sounds of nature, white noise, and music. Even if your baby isn't fussing or crying you may want to use music as often as you can to encourage that feeling of calm and peacefulness. All it takes is a few minutes every day and before you know it your baby will be looking forward to hearing that certain song emanating from the CD player. In fact, try and make the stereo the main fixture of the hall, rather than the TV - you'll be setting a trend that will reap benefits into the future.

There is nothing complicated or mysterious about introducing your baby to music from day one. You don't need to search for the perfect song or a certain type of music. All you have to do is start by having your baby listen to your favourite songs and music. If classical music is on the top of your list, put it on and let your baby enjoy it with you. You see, it's not important what you put on (within reason - don't go putting Iron Maiden on!) his mood is going to be altered by any musical sound that he hears.

Besides the music that you yourself can introduce your baby to, there are hundreds of CDs on the market today that are filled with baby songs and lullabies. At the end of the day you may want to play a CD of quiet baby songs

that have a slower beat. There are so many CDs for you to choose from that you will have a hard time making up your mind. Choose something that interests you. Many baby CDs will have lullabies and faster beat songs on the same CD.

Here are a few of the benefits that are associated with introducing music to your baby:

- Enhances her behaviour and cognitive skills.
- Reduces stress for the whole family.
- Will promote an interest in music that may last a lifetime.

You may even find that your baby seems to react positively when a particular song or artist is playing - this is very common and it can be used to soothe your baby in those times when she seems restless and irritable.

Some Dietary Factors - From Milk to Solids

Generally, your baby will get most of her nutrition from breast milk or an infant formula until the age of about 4 to 6 months. This chapter will help you learn what types of foods to introduce into your baby's diet at a certain key stage of her development. The information here should only be a guideline. Your doctor may provide you with other advise and your baby may have ideas of her own.

It is important to know that not all babies will be ready for solids at the same time. So what are the signs that she is ready? There are a few simple guidelines that you can follow that will give you the information that you need to start your baby on solid food. You should check with your doctor as well for his/her professional advice. Here are the signs for clues as to whether your baby is ready for solids or not:

- Birth weight has doubled.
- Your baby shows more interest in solids (she may even try and grab your own solid foods).
- Your baby consumes 32 oz or more each day of breast milk or formula.
- She often puts things into her mouth.
- She is able to sit up with some support and can turn her head when she is full.

If your baby can do all of the above she is probably ready to be introduced to solid foods. Another indicating factor is that your baby always seems to be hungry. You do not want to introduce solids too early into your baby's diet because this can increase the risk that she will develop a food allergy. Another reason for waiting four to six months before introducing solids is that it is important that she is fully able to swallow and chew safely without the threat of choking.

The first six months. During the first six months of your baby’s life breast milk or formula will be all that she needs for nourishment. If you are breastfeeding you will be using cues from your baby as to when she is full or hungry. If you are using formula you will likely have been following the guidelines for how much formula to feed your baby, as well as taking cues from your baby as to when she is full and when she is hungry. The following chart is a very general guideline for formula feeding - remember you should consult your doctor before introducing your baby to solids:

GUIDELINE FOR FORMULA FEEDING FOR AGE <u>0 to 5 MONTHS</u>		
Age	Amount per feeding	Number of feedings per 24 hours
1 month	2 to 4 ounces	6 to 8 times
2 months	5 to 6 ounces	5 to 6 times
3 to 5 months	6 to 7 ounces	5 to 6 times

By the age of 6 to 8 months most babies develop teeth and are ready to be introduced to strained/mashed or finely chopped fruit and vegetables.

By the time your baby is six months old you will want to think about giving up night feedings. Start by giving your baby less and less breast milk or formula during night feedings so that she eventually she will stop waking as her body adjusts to not eating during the night. If you are bottle-feeding you can substitute water in your baby’s bottle in place of milk or formula. Your baby is

almost ready to start eating solids and once she does she shouldn't be as hungry at night.

Four to six months: Introduction to solid food. You should try to wait until your baby is at least four months old before introducing her to anything other than breast milk or formula. You should start by offering your baby tiny amounts of baby cereal thinned with breast milk or formula. You can introduce your baby to fruit juices that are thinned with water. You may want to hold off introducing orange juice for another month or two since orange juice may be too acidic.

Six to seven months: Adding fruits and vegetables. Once your baby has been introduced to cereal you will want to add mashed/strained fruits and vegetables. Start with small amounts (one teaspoonful), increasing gradually as your baby gets used to the new food. You should only introduce one new food at a time and wait 2 to 4 days before introducing something new. This is so that if your baby has an allergic reaction you will be able to pinpoint which food is the culprit.

Make mealtime a happy time with your baby. Make sure that you only put milk or water into baby bottles and juice into a cup or glass. Putting juice into your baby's bottle can lead to dental problems later down the road due to the sugar content of juices.

Seven to eight months: Adding protein. From seven to eight months you will want to think about adding protein foods to your baby's diet. Protein foods include strained meats, cottage cheese, egg yolk, yoghurt, and dried

beans. As with the fruits and vegetables, you will want to introduce one new food at a time and wait 2 to 4 days before introducing a new food, starting with a small helping (one teaspoonful) and gradually increasing.

Eight to twelve months: Adding other foods. By now your baby will be ready to start eating what the rest of the family is eating. Start by adding soft table foods to your baby's diet such as mashed potatoes, squash, soft meats, and soups. As your baby gets more teeth she will be able to add more foods to her diet.

There are some things that you should consider as your baby starts to be introduced to different food types:

- The baby's food does not need sugar, salt, desserts, pop, or sweets in them.
- Consult your doctor about introducing milk into her diet.
- Avoid nuts, seeds, popcorn, raw carrots, and other hard foods in her diet.
- Be sure to feed your baby a variety of good, healthy food so that you are promoting healthy eating habits from the start. Dietary habits are learned and by starting her on a healthy dietary lifestyle you are laying the foundations for a healthy life in adulthood too.
- Let your baby try and feed herself. It may be a mess to see but it helps to develop her motor skills and her sense of independence.

The below table demonstrates a guideline for the type of solid foods that may be introduced and when - because every baby is different it's best to consult your doctor.

Age	Food Type	Reason
4 to 6 Months	<p>Iron-fortified infant cereal (Breast milk may be used to moisten cereal)</p> <p>Rice</p> <p>Barley</p> <p>Oatmeal</p> <p>Soy</p>	<p>Some babies may need more than milk to satisfy their hunger between ages 4 and 6 months.</p> <p>Cereal provides a source of iron which is important.</p>
6 to 9 Months	<p>Start with pureed vegetables and then pureed fruit.</p> <p>Pureed fish/chicken may be added after 7 or 8 months.</p> <p>Pureed peas/beans and lentils may be added.</p> <p>After 7 months it's</p>	<p>To provide vitamins, minerals and energy.</p> <p>Meat provides valuable protein source for growth and non-pureed items help the baby learn chewing.</p>

	<p>possible to add “lumps” to replace purely pureed foods (within reason).</p> <p>Mild cheese can be introduced after meats.</p> <p>Dried toasts and rusks are good to promote teething.</p>	
<p>8 to 12 Months</p>	<p>“Family” Foods that are mashed but without added seasonings.</p> <p>Soft fruit pieces, cooked vegetable pieces, dry toast or mild cheese.</p>	<p>Helps the baby discover different textures of foods.</p>

As you begin to introduce your baby to food during the first year you should keep in mind that because babies are different, each one may have a different adjustment and reaction to the process of starting solids. You will find that your baby soon has her favourite foods that she looks forward to

eating as well as food that she will refuse to eat. Try to listen to what your baby is telling you while remaining within the guidelines outlined here.

Your Baby's Height And Weight

All parents have a natural concern about their baby's height and weight. However, there is not too much that you as a parent can do to change the natural course. Weight and height are largely genetic factors although some other issues can also be a factor (such as ethnicity and nutrition) but ultimately genetics is the main influence behind what your child will ultimately be in terms of weight and height.

Your paediatrician will use growth charts to track your child's physical growth, measuring your baby's length, weight, and head circumference at each check-up. The doctor can then compare the measurements for your baby to a chart of national averages for infants of the same age and sex. In this way the doctor will be able to tell you what *percentile* your baby is in when compared to averages for babies around the nation. For example, if your 4-month-old is in the 86th percentile for weight, that means 86 percent of the two-month-olds in your country weigh less, and that 14 percent weigh more. A baby that is at the 50th percentile in either height or weight is right at the national average.

Parents seem to worry (sometimes obsessively) about these percentages, and that worrying is often needless. There are many factors that come into play when determining where your baby's statistics will fall in the percentile chart. It is very important to remember that no two babies are the same and

that every child, due to body chemistry, heredity, diet, and many other factors will grow at their own pace. Some babies will grow in sudden spurts from the very beginning while others may take longer to begin their main growth spurts. It's important to remember that these indicators are only generic guides for a doctor to help in assessing your baby's growth.

Further to the measurements that your paediatrician will take during regularly scheduled doctor visits, it is possible to record your baby's growth at home (although these may not be as accurate as the measurements your doctor takes). These home measurements can provide a certain degree of insight into the growth of your baby.

Here are some simple ways that can help you measure your baby's growth at home using relatively common appliances. In case your baby is too small to stand up on the weighing machine, you can try using this procedure:

- Step onto a standard bathroom weighing machine while holding your baby in your arms.
- Note down the weight.
- Next, step onto the machine alone.
- See your own weight and subtract this number from the combined weight of you and your baby. This number is your baby's weight. Simple but very effective.

To measure your baby's length you need to lay her down on a flat surface (if you have a changing table this works very well) and stretch a measuring tape from head to toes.

For the measuring of head circumference you should wrap the measuring tape around your baby's head. You should wrap the measuring tape just above your baby's eyebrows, so the tape falls right at the top of the ears. What you are trying to measure is the point around his head that has the largest circumference.

When taking your baby to paediatrician more accurate measurements can be produced. They have far more accurate measuring tools made specifically for the purpose of measuring the characteristics of babies, such as proper baby scales equipped with cradles. Your doctor may take measurements a few times during one visit and then average the results together for the sake of accuracy and to compensate for any anomalies that may have occurred. It is important for the doctor's measurements to be as accurate as possible because an anomaly of as little as a few millimetres in length or a few grams in weight can make a difference where your baby falls on the charts. Since the results of these measurements may determine changes to your baby's diet, and other possible changes to how your baby is fed and treated during her first year, it is important that these results are as accurate as possible.

Your paediatrician will measure the following characteristics of your baby:

Weight: After calibrating the scale the doctor or nurse will place your baby on a special weighing scale. This will typically be a baby holding stainless steel cradle. After your child is able to stand on her own, your paediatrician will most likely use a standard upright scale.

Length: Like weighing, until your baby is able to stand up on his own, your doctor will perform the height/length measurements with your baby lying down. Your doctor may use a tape measure, much like you use at home, or may utilize a special “baby-measuring device”, which consists of a headboard and movable footboard to obtain the most accurate results possible.

Head circumference: This measurement will be taken in almost the same way you did at home. The doctor will take the measurement at the point where the head is at its largest circumference, right above the ears and around to the back of the head where the neck meets the cranium. Usually the paediatrician will record this measurement to the nearest 0.3 cm (1/8th of an inch).

The head is different from other parts of the body in that the brain is not fully formed at the time of birth and therefore the head will continue to grow during baby’s first year. A Baby’s head is a particular point of concern for the doctor because a head that is growing too rapidly can be a sign of hydrocephalus (water on the brain) and a head that is growing too slowly can be indicative of nutritional or developmental problems. Regardless, you shouldn’t be too concerned if your baby’s head appears a bit disproportional

compared to the rest of her body, as this is completely normal for the first year of life.

It is also worth remembering that a baby's initial birth weight, while a cause of anxiety for many parents, is not always a good indicator of how she will grow in future years. Premature babies for example do not always remain smaller than other children once they are several years old.

Baby Noises - Language Development

It is incredible, but within a years time your baby will progress from random crying to talking. This is quite an achievement for your baby and in a very short period of time. In this chapter we will look at your baby's development when it comes to language. You'll also discover what you can expect to see every month but it's important to remember that these stages of your baby's development are broad and because every baby is different these are not meant as exact milestones.

One month. Your baby will be able to understand speech long before actually talking. From birth he will look at your face and listen to your voice. He may make a small range of noises that will start to mean something to you - these may be made when he experiences feelings of hunger or pain (such as crying and certain sounds while he is breathing). When your baby is eating, you may notice him making sucking type noises and sounds of contentment. The way that your baby cries is an important communication method while he is actually unable to talk. Crying lays the foundation for speech as your baby

learns to control his vocal cords. Crying is also a baby's way of indicating hunger, discontentment, or general discomfort. Through responding to this crying you let your baby know that she is important to you - and this can really be reassuring for a young infant.

Two months. As a child enters his second month he is far more aware of the world - things such as sounds, even that of your voice, will amuse and fascinate your child. Change the tone of your voice and this will keep him amused. Your baby will respond with a variety of cooing sounds, vowel-like sounds, and sometimes some consonant sounds such as a "k". You will find that your baby has quite a collection of cooing sounds that she uses to communicate with you as well as discover how to use the sound of her own voice. During this time, try and talk with your baby - this will encourage her response and help in the development process. By looking into your baby's eyes you are communicating an important thing to her - that you are listening.

Three months. By now you will find that your baby is able to recognize your voice and may come to you or face you when your voice is heard. You may notice him laugh out aloud and may even scare himself by doing this (as he does not initially know that he is the one making the sounds). Your baby will be making sounds such as "ahhhh goo". He will squeal when he is happy and content, again often startling himself as he learns his own abilities.

At this stage you should not only talk to your baby but also introduce other communication forms such as singing and story telling. The greater your effort in trying to talk with him, the better his response is likely to be.

Four months. By now more and more communication should be taking place with your baby. You may notice a greater amount of smiling - while his babbling may have a noticeably singsong quality to it, often ranging into a high pitch that delights him as he learns to like the sound of his own voice. There will be lots of repetition to the sounds that your baby makes.

It is important that you always respond to your baby's "oohs" and "ahhs" and whatever other communication methods she is using - respond with your own voice tones. This is your chance to have a "chat time" with your baby and you should take advantage of these times - you are helping him to discover the art of conversation. There will also be certain times when your baby may also not be in the mood for talking. He will turn his head in the other direction and may put his arm over his face. He may be showing signs of anger or frustration by crying out, especially if something is taken away from him.

Five months. As each month progresses you will find that your baby is becoming better at communicating. It's possible that you will notice him imitate some sounds and gestures. By now he'll most likely be able to let you know if he's happy or sad. When attention is wanted your baby will babble until he is given the attention he feels he deserves. Interestingly, if you always respond to his communication efforts (whatever these may be) he'll repeat them whenever he wants your attention this way.

During this month it's likely that your baby will be looking at your mouth moving while you talk. Talk to him from across the room and he'll be able to

find you with ease. He is learning to control his vocal sounds as he watches your response to his sounds.

Six months. Your baby may now be using consonant-vowel combinations. It's quite possible that he has discovered his mirror reflection and is probably having conversations with himself. Your baby's language is becoming much more precise.

Here are some ways that you can help your baby develop her language skills:

- Speak very slowly and clearly.
- Identify and point out items, objects and people as you talk about them.
- Use shorter sentences sentences.
- Using repetition when singing songs and nursery rhymes helps the learning process.
- Reading to your baby is a good idea and should be done as often as possible - ask your baby questions and point things out to make the process as interactive as possible.
- Let your baby respond in his own way when communicating with her.

Seven months. Your baby is now continuing to learn how to use his newfound language skills. He may be able to do things such as wave goodbye and may accompany his wave with babbling sounds. He can say "mama" or "dada".

Eight months. Your baby is playing games such as pat a cake and peek-a-boo. Even though he can't speak the words that belong to these games, he can babble and talk to himself. It's likely that your baby knows what the word "No" means by now as well.

Nine to twelve months. It's possible that by now your baby understands requests and commands such as "give it" or "don't touch that". Similarly, she may understand simple questions such as "where's your rattle?" At this time you should be encouraging your baby to use gestures (and you should respond to them). For example if your baby indicates she wants to be picked up then say "you want to be picked up?" while picking her up. This helps the learning process. You should also talk about everything that you do, and use gestures (and short sentences) as you're doing them.

Here are some ways to help your baby with the learning process:

- **Look at books and talk about the pictures in simple languages. Where possible try and use books that your baby is able to hold.**
- **Talk often to your baby using simple words to identify objects in his life. Name trees, numbers, colours, and animals as you take your baby for a walk. You should also use your baby's name often - this way she will be able to recognise it.**
- **Talk back to your child when she talks with you.**
- **Introduce concepts to your baby, such as the "big" dog or the "little" mouse.**

- Give your baby time to get his words out; don't be tempted to complete sentences for him.
- Continue to read to your baby as much as possible. Reading should be part of your daily routine.
- From day one start to talk in a simple, short and uncomplicated way with your baby - even though she will not understand what you are saying this is laying the foundations for learning language.

Twelve months. After one year babies are generally able to say one or two words and are able to understand 25 words or more. For example if a person in the room asks, "where is daddy?" your baby will look for you. Your baby is also able to point at things (and ask for things in this way).

Understanding Your Baby's Motor Skills

Your baby's motor skills develop in sequence - that is, usually, from head to foot. Hence, your baby's ability to co-ordinate her head and arms will usually come before she can co-ordinate her feet and legs. What is often unknown is that the development also occurs from the middle of the body first - so your baby will be able to co-ordinate her torso before her arms and so on.

Motor skills are a key development stage for babies as it enables them to become more independent. As soon as a baby is born he will begin the process of developing the motor skills that are vital for her to manipulate and interact with his environment. The ways in which different babies develop their motor

skills can have a big effect on their outlook towards the environment that they are a part of. In fact the development of your baby's motor skills and her experiences and ability to take on new skills are very closely linked. As her motor skills grow, so will your baby's ability to interact in a deeper way with her environment.

The development process can be broken up in to three-month intervals and divided into two categories: gross motor skills and fine motor skills. *Gross motor skills* are the term used to describe your baby's ability to control different parts of her own body. *Fine motor skills* refer to your baby's level of coordination of different body parts, such as picking up an object with her thumb and forefinger.

As we touched on above your baby's development will begin at the head and work its way down. You can expect your baby to first develop control over the neck muscles before progressing to the torso, and then the leg muscles. You might notice now that your baby will be able to turn over and sit up independently and perhaps even crawl a about a little. You can now sit her on your knee and bounce her up and down gently - it's a good way to promote her balance skills. At the age of eight months old you will find that she can probably now stand up using her own resources (although she may need to use chairs/upright objects to help her do this).

When it comes to actually walking, babies can usually expect to start this between the ages of nine to fifteen months of age. Most will start at about thirteen months. If you find that your baby is unable to walk but can do other

things such as crawling, standing, or sitting upright, then do not worry as this is really quite normal. In fact some babies even miss the crawling stage completely and go on to walking (this may be very late - as much as seventeen months for example).

One of the first things that you will be taught as a new parent is how to support your baby's head - as most babies are unable to do this themselves until the age of 3. Usually by about 7 months of age your baby is likely to be able to hold his head steadily using his own control, for longer periods of time. To help your baby develop head control here is what you can do:

- Gently place your baby stomach facing down on the floor. Try and do this a few times a day.
- Try and get your baby to lift her head - perhaps by sitting down next to her so your face is close to hers.

There are several ways to help your baby begin the process of walking. Some parents think that expensive toys and walking aids are required to facilitate early development but this is not actually the case. The most important factor, which should be done as much as possible, is interaction with your child. This helps to stimulate brain development which is obviously a key factor. There are different ways of doing this - for instance babies love to hear stories and this is a great method of facilitating brain development. Instead of telling your baby a story and making it up as you go along, try reading it aloud to her from a book. Among other things, story telling also aids the development

of her vocabulary. You should also play with her, talk and sing to her as much as possible. Did you know that younger siblings in a family often develop at a faster rate than their older brothers and sisters? Can you think why this is? If you guessed it is because the younger sibling has someone to constantly interact with then you are correct. As far as toys and walking aids, walkers are definitely NOT recommended, because babies tend to rely on them too much. Using walkers may well stunt the development of your baby's upper leg muscles and as a result delay the progression of her motor skills. And if you need another reason why walkers are not a great idea, were you aware that every year there are approximately 200,000 walker related injuries? The scary thing is that 30,000 of these are quite serious and can include fractures, broken bones and dislocations. In fact Canada has banned the use of walkers altogether.

Rolling over is another action that is something of a landmark for your baby's development. Typically, after about 4 or 5 months your baby may be able to roll over in one direction (e.g. stomach to back or vice versa). After 6 or 7 months she may be able to roll over both ways. Helping your baby to roll can be helped by several of the points raised above (such as using her favourite toys as an incentive). Make sure your baby has plenty of space for rolling (a good clean and non slip floor is a good place for this).

There are some things you can do to help your baby in developing her motor skills. These may well help her start to walk earlier:

- While indoors your baby should be allowed to walk bare-foot because it is far easier for a baby to learn how to walk this way (as opposed to wearing shoes). Just remember to make sure that the floor is not slippery.
- Hold your baby by her torso when helping her learn to walk - do not hold her by her arms and legs.
- You can try and “entice” your baby to develop her motor skills for walking. For example, bribe her by holding her rattle/toy just beyond her reach so that she has to crawl and get it.

Motor skills are somewhat different to hand and eye coordination although there are some similarities. Hand-eye coordination is usually seen to parallel/compliment gross and fine motor skills development. Here are some activities you can introduce your baby to, for the stimulation of her motor skills and hand eye coordination.

- *Try Installing A Crib Gym:* This will allow him to “swat” at the objects above him - however it may be safest to remove this once your baby is able to sit up by himself.
- *Different Types Of Interaction:* When your baby is below you, dangle some objects in front of him so that he has the chance to bat at them.
- *Using Fun Objects:* When your baby is at least 4 months old let her grasp safe objects that have a fun feel to them - for

example a rattle - this may want her coming back for more as well as keep her wanting to hold on.

- *Jigsaw Puzzles:* Get hold of a few baby-puzzles (usually consisting of just a few jigsaw pieces). Then progress her onto slightly more difficult puzzles (make sure they are not too difficult as this can end up just irritating her).
- *Baby Lego:* These simple toys require your baby to assemble and fit the different shapes and sizes and are a good way to develop her motor skills.
- *Plastic building blocks:* These types of blocks allow babies to stack and build things that require balance and use a different set of hand/eye coordination skills and motor skills.
- *Peg and hole toys:* These are toys that are made of plastic and have holes fitted to plastic pegs for the baby to differentiate different shapes and also to develop motor skills and hand/eye coordination.
- *Plastic “Doughnuts”:* Another popular toy for encouraging the development of motor skills is the graduated soft plastic Doughnuts that fit on a plastic centre pole. Your baby can stack these and will soon learn more about shapes, sizes and colours, and how they relate to one another.

So what does the crawling and walking process look like? Well, between 8 and 13 months most babies follow this kind of development:

- First your baby will be able to get herself on her hands and knees.
- Then she will jolt back and forth, in an attempt to try and take her first movements forward.
- She will learn several new methods of moving around, such as swivelling and squirming on her stomach.
- Once this starts, within a month she will be able to crawl forwards. In some babies the crawling begins backwards before they learn how to crawl forwards.
- Different babies have different crawling styles - everything from bouncing along on their bottoms to crawling with arms and legs extended may be seen.

These locomotion skills that your baby is trying to learn can be developed by doing a few simple things. For example, games such as “crawl tag” can be great fun for your baby and provide her with valuable locomotion training. Crawl after your baby slowly saying, “I’m going to get Baby!” (or anything you wish) and then turn and crawl away to try and let her crawl towards you. You could also create a crawling track - a kind of obstacle course on the floor where several of her favourite

playthings are used as the “obstacles”. Again, good fun for your baby and very useful for her development.

Looking at the chart below you’ll find a very generic timeline for milestones that your baby may cross in the first year and half:

1-3 months	Baby’s hand is curled into a fist that instinctively holds onto objects that are put into her palm. At two months the grasp is less reflexive and more controlled. At three months, the palm is weakly open but with little strength to grip objects.
5 months	Baby begins reaching for objects such as toys. Baby might briefly grasp and hold toys. Baby will enjoy sucking her own hands.
6 months	Baby is beginning to follow objects with her eyes. Baby is sucking her feet and grasping objects between both hands.
7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops ability to transfer objects from one hand to the other.

	can simultaneously grip objects in both hands.
8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to keep hands open and relaxed most of the time. • Able to pick up small foods, like Cheerios.
10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to release an object voluntarily. • Gives toy to caregiver when asked. • Able to hold more than one object in her hand.

Your Baby's Interaction With Others

The first year of your baby's life will be filled with different experiences, joys and challenges - one thing that she will ultimately have (and want) to do is interact with other humans. The process of developing social skills starts here - first within your own family and friends, but ultimately you should try and let your baby be around others outside of your own family.

This is important for her to be able to learn communication skills and be able to interact with others right from the very start.

The reason that it is good to expose your baby to different playmates and people is that these are the foundations to providing her with good social skills as she develops into childhood, and eventually adulthood. Try and get out with your baby a few times every week, preferably so that she is interacting with other babies

At such a young age, babies do not play in the traditional sense, but by seeing other babies, parents, people and places your baby is beginning to construct an idea of what the world is like. It can also be fascinating for babies to see other babies - they may well interact by touching, hitting or grabbing each other in a gentle way. Just remember that if your baby is not well, do not expose her to other babies - babies are very open to catching colds etc so bare this in mind.

Having said this, get out and about with your baby in several different settings. Take her to the supermarket, to parent-baby exercise sessions, to play-parks and so on. The more places you go the better for your child. You can even take your baby to a playgroup or to the swimming pool.

Ultimately, getting out and about with your baby is good for her for so many reasons - it also breaks up the usual routine .

The Teething Process

The teething process can be a difficult period for both the baby and the parents. The process starts at different ages depending on each baby but usually by age of 3 most infants have their primary teeth in place. If by one

year your baby still has not got his first tooth it would be wise to see your doctor and dentist.

There are 20 *primary* or “baby” teeth that every child has during their lifetime, with ten in the upper jaw and ten in the lower. Usually, the appearance of baby teeth is as follows: the upper and lower incisors come first, then the upper lateral incisors come in a few months later, followed shortly thereafter with the bottom lateral incisors. The top and bottom molars are the next set to come through, usually right around 18 months. The cuspids, or eyeteeth, usually follow soon after the molars. At approximately two, to two and a half years, the second set of molars will appear.

Usually there is no set order in which baby teeth appear - again this depends on the individual baby. It is unusual for a child not to get all twenty teeth.

Some babies can be born with a front tooth (this happens in about 1 in every 2000 cases). In this even it is wise to consult a paediatric dentist. This situation can affect the breastfeeding process so a paediatric dentist should be consulted as soon as possible, especially if you intend to breastfeed.

Here are the signs that your baby may be teething:

- **Bulging gums - you'll be able to see the outline of the teeth as they try and push through his gums.**
- **Nighttime crying and walking.**
- **More fuss than normal.**

- “Clingy” behaviour.
- An increase in the amount of drooling seen.
- Chewing on fingers, teething rings, and other objects.
- Swollen, red, inflamed gums.
- Poor appetite.
- Interrupted sleep.

There is some debate about this, but it is now generally accepted that teething will not cause fever, sleep issues or lower immunity to infection.

Teething is very painful - if you have ever bitten the inside of your cheek you know how painful this can be - now imagine a baby that is used to a soft smooth surface (gums) and suddenly she has a hard and sharp tooth pushing through her swollen gums. Generally it’s the first tooth that will cause the most discomfort.

When babies are going through the teething process they sometimes bring their hands to their mouths - this brings some relief when the gums have pressure applied to them. You can gently massage your baby to reduce the discomfort of teething - clean your fingers and rub the gums firmly - this may be uncomfortable for your baby initially but she will get used to, and appreciate, the massage the more you do it.

Give your baby something cool to chew on - this again provides relief for a little time. Wet washcloths (you can soak this in apple juice if you wish) that have been left in the freezer for 30 minutes or so - can be given to your baby

to chew. Just remember, whatever you use make sure that your baby cannot choke on it. Other things that your baby can chew on include a chilled banana or an iced Popsicle. An old wives tale remedy recommends that you dab some alcohol on your baby's gums - it is strongly recommended that you do NOT do this.

While primary teeth will at one stage be replaced by the permanent teeth, they are very important for several reasons - including chewing and speech. Once these teeth are in, you can clean them with a special baby toothbrush.

Be sure to never allow your baby to fall asleep with a bottle. This will lead to tooth decay. Whether a baby is bottle fed or nursed, he will be vulnerable to "baby bottle tooth decay". Such decay occurs when freshly sprouted baby teeth are exposed to liquids containing sugars (basically, anything other than water) for long periods of time. Bacteria in the mouth will grow in the sugar, which attack the tooth enamel and cause cavities. The best treatment for "baby bottle tooth decay" is prevention. Don't let your baby use a bottle as a pacifier or fall asleep with a bottle containing anything but water. Also, be sure to gently clean his teeth and gums after each feeding.

You may also see some teething symptoms - on the whole these are fairly harmless. For example, drool rash where a red rash can be seen on the face, lips, chin and chest. This can be washed with warm water and a cloth and your doctor may prescribe a lanolin ointment as treatment for this. Sometimes

other symptoms can include mild diarrhoea and a cough caused by excess saliva dripping down the baby's throat.

Here are some good tips to use to care for your baby's teeth:

- Clean your baby's mouth before the teething process. You can wipe the gums after each feeding with a warm, wet washcloth.
- Take good care of the teeth once they start to come in. Some parents wrongly believe that because primary teeth are eventually replaced they are not that important - this is false as they preserve the space for the permanent teeth, not to mention help with chewing and talking.
- Actively watch for cavities - if you spot any discolouration or pitting then they could be signs of cavities. Try and avoid putting your baby to sleep with milk (or even worse sweet juice) as it could lead to cavities. In addition follow up meals with water as this helps to wash off most infant foods quite easily.
- Introduce a toothbrush as soon as possible. In addition you should monitor your baby's fluoride intake as this can help prevent tooth decay. It's also important to schedule a dental check up for your baby - shortly after the first year is a good time for the first visit.

Creating good dental practice from the start will help ensure that you baby continues good dental hygiene for years into the future.

Immunization And Your Baby's First Illness

Without doubt, making sure that your baby has the correct immunizations is very important. She will be given several vaccinations from her birth and these will continue into her childhood. Since immunization was first introduced it has saved hundreds of thousands of children's lives. The simple procedure involves injecting your baby with vaccines, which protect them against serious, and sometimes fatal, diseases.

The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends that babies receive the following vaccinations, but remember that this may change over time so please check with your doctor for the most up to date ones:

- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Inactivated polio (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- Pneumococcal (PCV)
- Hepatitis B (HepB)
- Influenza (flu)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

By giving your child these vaccines you are protecting her for her whole life against several diseases. Many of the above vaccines protect your baby

against diseases that are particularly prevalent in the early years of a child's life, while some are for diseases that can occur at any time in life.

The injections are likely to be painful for your baby as they involve getting in injection via hypodermic needle. However, they're worth it for the protection your child will receive in the long term.

The diseases these vaccinations protect your baby from are very serious. Babies may become very ill and even die if they are allowed to develop the diseases that are prevented by these shots.

Babies are born with some degree of pre-determined natural immunity - this is acquired in the womb from the mother's blood. This immunity is further strengthened during breastfeeding (breast milk is rich in antibodies). However this type of immunity is passive and wears off during the baby's first year, thus leaving her open to several diseases. This is why vaccines are so important.

Your doctor or health care clinic will notify you when it is time for your baby's first shot, which generally occurs at three months.

It's likely that your baby will catch a cold at some point, and this can understandably be an anxious time for parents. It's possible that along with the cold your baby may develop a fever - symptoms will include a cough, runny nose/sore throat and watery eyes - she may also display signs of irritability. A baby that is under 6 years of age is unlikely to be able to breathe through a stuffed nose - this will mean that even eating may be a challenge. You can expect a cold to last anywhere from 2 to 10 days old, sometimes even longer.

Most babies have several colds by the time they reach 2 years of age, and sadly each one is uncomfortable for the baby and anxious for the parents.

If your baby is under three months old when he gets his cold you should contact your doctor. If your baby is over three months old you only need to contact your doctor if the fever gets too high, the cold lasts too long, or you suspect your baby may have an ear infection, cough, or other secondary problem from his cold.

Until the cold disappears there are several things that you can do to ease your baby's discomfort during his cold:

- Rest is important, ensure your baby gets as much of it as possible.
- Plenty of liquids are needed, especially if a fever is also present.
- If the baby is stuffed up elevate her head by putting a pillow or two under the crib mattress at one end.
- Keep your baby comfortable by wiping his runny nose - this will help him breathe easier.
- Lots of love, affection and patience are required at this point.

As worried as you are likely to get, your baby's cold will ultimately pass.

The Best Toys For Your Baby

When choosing toys for your baby you should remember that they should be both fun and educational - there are a wide range of toys to choose from that can make your baby squeal with joy and we will discuss some of them in this chapter.

There are toys for four different stages during your baby's first year and we'll look at each one individually:

Newborns - the choices here include hand held toys, tape players/music boxes and unbreakable mirrors among others. Your baby will probably find her own reflection interesting. Soft books with high-contrast, easy to see patterns can also be quite nice for your baby. Toys that make noises when squeezed are also available for this age range and this actually helps develop her motor skills as she becomes aware that the noise occurs while she squeezes.

3 To 6 Months - Now we see more choice. For example you can get a play gym which is a rack with attached toys. The baby is able to bat or swat the toys and it makes life more fun while she is still horizontal. **Lightweight rattles** can also be fun for babies at this age. **Soft Toys** can be a great companion for your baby but make sure they are soft and cuddly. **Boardbooks** and **playmates** are other options.

6 To 9 Months - For this age range you can start to introduce your baby to **activity boards** - these have moveable and spinning parts that your baby can

interact with. This is great for hand-eye co-ordination. **Balls** are also an option now - light fabric ones that she can perhaps crawl after. **Wooden or Soft Blocks** are fun for her to stack and play with. Some **Moving Toys** and **Books** can also be introduced now. At six to nine months your baby will begin to become much more active and play will become much more intense than in previous stages. She will be picking up things and banging all sorts of objects, making noise and generally causing a ruckus. She will pick up two toys and bang them together just to see the sound that they make. She is becoming aware that objects are still there even when she can no longer see or touch them. She will miss a favourite stuffed animal if she can't see it and if you hide it from her while she is looking she will seek it out. It also means you can begin playing hide-and-seek games with objects.

9- 12 Months - As your baby grows, so does the sophistication of her toys. At this age she will be able to play with **push toys** that will allow her to use her new found walking skills. There are also **shape sorters** where she will try and match the object to the hole. **Toy telephones, buckets and spades** and **blocks** may also be used.

Looking back at your own childhood I'm sure you recall that toys were a lot of fun. It's now time to let your own child experience the fun and laughter that they can bring.

And Finally...

Hopefully you have found this guide incredibly useful. It's possible that no book or person can fully prepare you for the magical journey that is your baby's first year. There are plenty of laughs, much joy and love and probably a fair bit of anxiety too in that first year but I know that you will feel it will be one of the best experiences that you have ever had.

I wish you and your baby a wonderfully healthy and happy life!

Keziah Engineer

END

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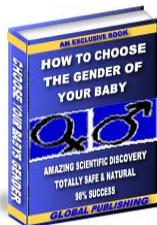
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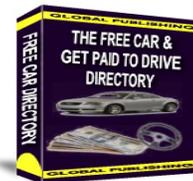
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