

Your Child at Two to Four Weeks

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DEVELOPMENT:

All babies develop at their own rate. At two to four weeks old you may notice that your baby:

- Shows better head control
- Lifts his or her head when lying on tummy
- Grasps your finger
- Stares at faces briefly
- Becomes quiet when others speak
- Cries differently for pain, hunger and tiredness—the cries can be hard to tell apart
- Calms when swaddled and rocked

IMUNIZATIONS: Hepatitis B (given at age one or two months)

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- Fever
- More irritability or fussiness
- Redness or swelling at the site of the shot

Side effects of the Hepatitis B vaccine are rare. If your baby develops fever, excessive fussiness, or irritability, you should call your provider or seek medical attention to discuss as these can also be signs of serious illness in young infants.

Next visit: One or two months of age

NUTRITION:

Babies at this age get all their nutrition from breast milk or formula. Try to breast-feed as much as you can for as long as possible. Below are some facts and tips on feeding your baby.

- Breast-fed babies may nurse five to 12 times a day.
- Bottle-fed babies may drink three to six ounces at every feeding and may feed five to eight times a day.
- If you give your baby formula, choose one that is iron-fortified. Always follow the package directions when making formula. You do not need to boil water before preparing formula.
- Do not heat bottles in the microwave because this can lead to uneven heating and burns.
- There may be times when your baby wants to be fed every hour. Feed your baby as needed.
- If you are breast-feeding and are going to use a bottle, wait until your baby is about age three to four weeks. Your baby may refuse the bottle if you wait longer. If you plan to give your breast-fed baby some bottles over a long term (if you plan to go back to work, for example), then offer your baby one bottle a day. If your baby does not want to bottle feed, try giving him or her more bottles until your baby gets used to drinking from one.
- It is normal for your baby to feed at night at this age.



PEDIATRIC HEALTH

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- Many babies spit up when they feed. If your baby spits up often, keep his or her head raised for at least 30 minutes after feeding. Spitting up small amounts is harmless as long as your baby is gaining weight and is not in pain. Spitting up usually ends by age six to nine months.
- After feeding, gently burp your baby by holding him or her on your chest. Keep your baby upright and gently pat or stroke his or her back. Do this for two to five minutes. Your baby may not burp after every feeding.
- If your baby only drinks breast milk or drinks less than 32 ounces of formula every day, he or she should take 400 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily. You can get vitamin D over the counter. Ask your Provider for details.
- Do not prop bottles in your baby's mouth. Do not add cereal to your baby's bottles. Do not give your baby extra water. Do not give your baby honey.

COMMON CONCERNS

- **Stools:** Babies' stools are often runny, yellow and seedy with curds of undigested milk and may smell musty. Stools may also be green. Babies often make dramatic faces, pass gas, strain and draw up their legs when passing stools. As long as the stools are soft, this is not constipation and you should not worry. True constipation is rare at this age.

Newborns may soil their diapers many times a day, often with every feeding. After about three weeks, some babies pass stools less often—one to two per day. Some babies may even pass stools once every few days. If your baby is eating well, seems comfortable, is gaining weight and has soft stools, do not worry about the rate that he or she passes stools.

- **Crying/colic:** For the first two to three weeks your baby's crying often means that he or she is hungry. Try feeding your baby. After this age, crying can mean other things—that your baby is tired, for example.

Some babies have colic—this means that they cry a lot. These babies tend to cry more in the evening. If your baby has colic, try soothing him or her with rocking, swinging, car rides, music, pacifiers or swaddling. Colic generally ends around three months.

- **Bathing:** After your baby's umbilical cord falls off, you can bathe him or her in a small tub.
- **Sleeping:** Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies should sleep on a firm mattress covered with a fitted sheet. Keep pillows, bumpers, blankets and toys away from your baby while he or she sleeps.

SAFETY

- Never shake your baby.
- Never tie a pacifier or put jewelry around your baby's neck because he or she could choke on it.
- Always place your baby in a car seat that faces backward in the back seat. For more information on car seats or to find a car seat inspection office in your area, go to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site: nhtsa.gov.
- Do not let people smoke around your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car or a bath or on high surfaces.
- Help prevent illness by avoiding crowded places and wash your hands often.
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit so you won't burn your baby. Also do not cook or drink hot liquids while holding your baby.

- Take an infant CPR class.
- Make sure that your baby's toys do not have sharp edges and can't be broken. The toys should be at least one and a half inches wide—your baby could choke on them if they are smaller than that. Keep balloons and plastic bags away from your baby—they are dangerous and can suffocate your child.
- Make sure that the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, please speak with your Provider or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or ndvh.org.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

- Postpartum depression can happen at any time during the first year. While postpartum blues are common during the first few weeks, they usually get better. If moms feel sad, anxious or depressed beyond this time, they should seek help and talk with their Provider. You can find more information online at postpartum.net.
- Try to nap or rest when your baby sleeps.
- Older brothers and sisters may be jealous of the new baby. Spending time alone with your older children may help.
- Moms should schedule a six-week postpartum check up. Talk with your Provider about birth-control options, if you like.
- Enjoy spending time with your new baby. Cuddle him or her—babies this age can't be spoiled. Responding to your baby right away at this time teaches your baby that he or she will be cared for and loved.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR PROVIDER'S OFFICE

Call your Provider if you have questions about your baby or if he or she:

- Has a rectal temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Cries a lot more than normal or can't be comforted
- Has trouble breathing
- Is limp or sluggish

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org; American Academy of Family Physicians: aafp.org; Immunization information: immunize.org, cdc.gov/vaccines, vaccine.chop.edu, familyProvider.org and vaccineinformation.org
- Suggested reading:
 - *Baby 411: Clear Answers & Smart Advice for Your Baby's First Year* by Ari Brown, M.D., and Denise Fields
 - *Bestfeeding: Getting Breastfeeding Right for You* by Mary Renfrew, et al.
 - *The Happiest Baby on the Block* by Harvey Karp
 - *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Marc Weissbluth
 - *Infants and Mothers: Differences in Development* by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.
 - *What to Expect the First Year* by H. Mukoff
 - *Touchpoints: Birth to Three* by T. Berry Brazelton, MD & Joshua Sparrow, MD
- Other books are available at aap.org/bookstore.