



Baby Basics

Birth to 6 Months



**Congratulations
on your
new baby!**

Birth to 6 months is a very exciting time for families. You and your baby are learning about each other.

Knowing your baby's cues will make this time for you both more rewarding.



Sleep:

A newborn will need to eat every 2–3 hours.

Breastfed babies may nurse every 1½ to 2 hours.

A baby should be put down to sleep on his back for safe sleeping.

Baby's sleep pattern:

0–8 weeks.....A newborn baby sleeps 14-16 hours in a 24-hour period. Baby will wake up 3–4 times during the night. Sleep will be unpredictable while your baby is getting used to the new world.

2 months.....Your baby will stay awake more during the day and wake 2–3 times during the night. This is normal and healthy.

4 months.....Your baby will wake 1–2 times per night.

6 months.....Your baby may be able to sleep for 6 hours at night. Breastfed babies may nurse frequently.

Tips for sleepy parents:

- Keep your baby close at night. Pediatricians recommend you put baby's crib or bassinet in your room for the first few months. When your baby needs something, you won't have far to go.
- Try some "white noise." Play music softly or turn on a quiet fan so you won't wake up with every little sound your baby makes. You will still be able to hear if baby really needs you, but you won't wake up every time baby moves.
- Keep lights low while you feed, burp and change baby's diaper during the night. This will help you get to sleep more quickly.
- Sleep when your baby sleeps.
- Ask for help.

Feeding Your Newborn:

Breast milk or iron fortified formula is all that your baby needs for the first 6 months. Always hold your baby to feed with a bottle. Never prop the bottle up in your baby's mouth. Your baby needs to feel safe in your arms, and to be able to stop eating when full. Propping the bottle is a choking hazard.



Do not put cereal in baby's bottle. Cereal may cause your baby to choke. New research indicates that giving cereal too early can lead to food allergies because the baby's digestive system is not mature until 6 months of age.

Hunger cues:

- Rooting (opening mouth, searching to suck, and sucking on contact)
- Bringing hands to mouth
- Sticking out tongue and licking lips
- Sucking motions or sounds
- Rapid eye movements while in light sleep
- Crying is a late sign of hunger: a baby crying from hunger may be too upset to settle down to feed

Fullness cues:

- Baby closes its mouth
- Baby turns away
- Baby looks relaxed and calm

Daily intakes birth to 6 months:

Age	Type	Amount	Time
0–4 months	Expressed breast milk or infant formula	2–4 ounces	every 2–3 hours
4–6 months		4–6 ounces	every 3–4 hours

Infants may get more milk when at the breast – amounts vary. There is no way to calculate ounces of milk breastfed.

Growth:

Your baby will have growth spurts. Usually around 2–3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months. Your baby will want to eat more during these growth spurts, which usually last 2-3 days.

You will know your baby is getting enough to eat if they are having 6 or more wet diapers per day and your baby is growing.

Food safety:

Safely feeding your baby will prevent illness from germs.

- Wash your hands before every feeding.
- If using formula, use water that has been boiled and then cooled to prepare the formula bottle.
- All bottles, nipples, rings, and caps must be sterilized before use.
- Mix formula according to directions on the formula.
- Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 3 days.
- Formula made from powder can be stored for 1 day.
- Formula made from concentrate can be stored for 2 days.



NEVER heat bottle in a microwave. It will heat unevenly and burn your baby's mouth.

Playtime:

Your baby needs daily play for good health!

- Put your baby on a clean blanket on the floor on his back and watch how he stretches and kicks his legs.
- Providing daily tummy time will help your baby push up on his arms and roll over.
- Play peek-a-boo, and pat-a-cake.
- Read and sing to your baby every day.

Crying:

Although it is stressful to hear a baby cry, crying is normal for all babies. It is one way they communicate with you.

By crying, your baby might be telling you they:

- Want to be close to you
- Are afraid
- Are tired
- Are sick
- Are too hot or too cold
- Need a diaper change
- Need quiet time
- Are hungry
- Need to be burped

Do not feed your baby every time he cries. This may cause overfeeding, which is uncomfortable for your baby and is the number one reason for excessive spitting up.

When your baby cries, try to figure out the reason. If you have tried everything and your baby is still crying, hold your baby close and repeat the same action over and over such a gentle rocking, singing or gently massage the baby's back, arms and legs.

Be patient, calming a baby takes time. Ask for help if you get angry or frustrated with your baby. If nobody is around, lay your baby down in a safe place for a few minutes and take a break. Contact your doctor if you think your baby is crying too much.



Remember that babies cry less and less as they get older.