

LOUISIANA'S FUTURE: FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



Your Security Blanket

A monthly newsletter for parents of newborns

First Month

The First Month
The first month of your baby's life is full of many changes and developments. But before discussing baby, here is a word to you, the parents:

Expect me to sleep 18-22 hours a day, and I might cry as much as two hours. My hearing is well developed, but my sight is not. I often use only one eye at a time, so my eyes cross.

Hold, pat and cuddle me to make me feel secure and learn to trust. Use a soft tone of voice. I'll talk to you again next month. Bye. I love you!

Mom and Dad

Fathers often feel they have a very little part in their new baby's life, but they can and should! Dad, if you wait too long to hold and care for your child, he may react to you as though you were a stranger. So, get acquainted with him now! Mom will really appreciate your help. Carrying a baby for nine months and then delivering the child are hard on a woman's body. These first few weeks will be very tiring for her, and your help and support are important.

Mom, are you slightly depressed? Do you cry easily? Don't despair! Your reaction is normal and even has a name - "baby blues." Not all mothers suffer from this, but many do. It is temporary, and you will recover quickly!

Baby's Development - A Message From Baby



Since I can't talk yet, every month I'll write to you about my development and what you can do to help me learn. Here goes:

You might have been a little surprised at how I looked with wrinkled skin and tightly curled hands. If I came through the birth canal, I have an elongated head. Check my reflexes. Touch your fingertip to my cheek. I will turn my head in that direction and try to get your finger in my mouth and suck it. This is my sucking reflex.

Now, put your finger in my palm. Did my fingers close tightly around it? This is called the palmer grasp.

Baby's Food



We hope you are nursing your baby. If you are frustrated about this for any reason, talk to someone before "giving up." Advice and practice are the best ways to learn to breastfeed. If you are bottle feeding, remember always to dilute powdered or concentrated formula *exactly* as directed. You should offer your baby cooled, boiled water 2-3 times a day. Do not add sugar or sweeteners to the water. Do not give baby coffee, tea or soft drinks. Caffeine is a stimulant and may be harmful.

Baby's Health

Immunize your baby! Children under two are susceptible to nine dangerous diseases that can be prevented by vaccinations. Your child can get immunization at the parish health unit or a doctor's office. Follow this schedule:

Age	Vaccines needed*
Birth	HBV
2 months	DTP, Hib, OPV, HBV
4 months	DTP, Hib, OPV
6 months	DTP, Hib, HBV, OPV
12-15 months	DTP, Hib, MMR
4-6 years	DTP, OPV, MMR Booster

*DTP = Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough) There are possible side effects. Check with your doctor.
 Hib = Haemophilus influenza type B
 OPV = Oral polio vaccine
 MMR = Measles, mumps and rubella
 HBV = Hepatitis B vaccine


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Most babies spit up some or even a lot of milk after a feeding. The milk seems to overflow from baby's mouth. This is not really a problem; it's just messy. Babies who spit up grow as fast and as strong as those who do not. Some tips that might help are:

 Burp baby halfway through feeding, at the end of feeding and a few minutes later.

 Place baby down so that his head is higher than his stomach for 10-15 minutes.

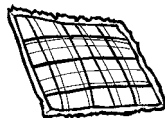
Many babies develop colic between the second and fourth week after birth. Colic causes cramps which produce discomfort in the intestine. Try laying your baby on his stomach across your knee and rubbing his back. If his discomfort seems extreme, call your doctor.

Safety Tips

Do not put a pillow in your baby's crib or lay him on a bean bag. He doesn't need it, and it's dangerous. If his face becomes buried in it, he may not have the strength to lift his head. When placing a baby in a crib, always place him on his back, not his stomach. It helps to remember the phrase "back to sleep."

Baby's Temperament


Your baby cries because he is uncomfortable and needs you. At this age he cannot be spoiled, so always go to him when he cries. Your child will learn to trust you and feel secure if you take care of him right away. Some babies are fussy the first 3 - 4 months and need lots of soothing until they outgrow their fussiness. Fussy babies can be tiring, so if this sounds like your baby, try to get helpers so you can rest. Some tips to soothe baby: try rocking, gentle bouncing, nursing, soft music or other sounds. Even the vacuum cleaner might help.





Diapering

Diaper rash is one of baby's first problems. To help prevent it, change diapers immediately after bowel

movements, and whenever the baby seems to be uncomfortable because of a wet diaper. Don't disturb his sleep just to change him, however. The buttocks and genitals should be cleaned each time the diaper is changed. Don't use powders because they can get into the lungs. If your baby gets a diaper rash, try one of the following:

 Use zinc oxide ointment or petroleum jelly to protect baby's skin.

 Expose rash area to air when you can. If the rash doesn't heal or if it bleeds, a doctor should look at it. If the rash is caused by a yeast infection, special medicine is needed.

 When cloth diapers become soiled, wash in *hot* water with mild detergent and rinse several times. Adding one-half cup of vinegar to the last rinse might help.

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