

YOUR ONE MONTH OLD

Congratulations! You have made it through the first month of parenting! Your baby is growing quickly and spending more time awake. You are probably excited to see the changes but also tired from sleepless nights. We hope the following information helps you through this next month.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

Every baby develops at a different rate. It is tempting to compare your baby with other babies (or even your older children), but remember – each baby is different.

The first muscles the baby can control are her neck and shoulder muscles. You can help her develop these muscles by allowing her to spend some time on her tummy when she is awake. She will soon begin to raise her head and look around. Put your face in front of her so she will have something interesting to see. Babies at this age can see well for about 2 feet. They enjoy looking at bright, contrasting colors like black and white. They love to see faces. Babies eyes normally cross for short periods of time – but please let your doctor know if one eye always seems to be crossed.

Babies are beginning to smile and make sounds. Talk to your baby a lot when he is awake. Sometimes wait a little after you have talked to him to let him try to copy you. Try making a funny face, and he may copy that, too. Research tells us that the best way to help babies learn to talk is to respond when they talk to you. So, after your baby coos, talk back to him.

Babies love to be held. You cannot spoil your baby at this age by holding her too much.

Remember – babies cry the most between 6 – 8 weeks of life. Please see the 2 week handout and the Soothing handout for more information.

FEEDING

Feeding should be an enjoyable time for you and your baby. It is a time for your baby to enjoy looking at your face, feel secure in your arms, and listen to your voice. Your baby will sense your emotions, so take a big breath, relax, and appreciate this time together. Talk quietly to your baby or just smile at him, letting him see your face.

Most babies do not require extra feedings of water since formula and breast milk both contain 80% water. If the weather is extremely warm, you may wish to offer your baby additional water, although it is not usually necessary. Please do not give juice to your baby, and never give honey to infants less than one year of age.

At six weeks of age, many babies will have fewer bowel movements. Your baby may go 3 or 4 days without having a stool. As long as your baby is feeding normally, not throwing up, and is behaving normally, you do not need to worry. (A rare baby has gone as long as 10 – 14 days without stooling.)

If your baby is formula feeding:

Do not prop the bottles

Don't force your baby to eat more than she wants. Don't jiggle the bottle to encourage your baby to finish the bottle or eat more.

If your baby is breastfeeding:

Remember to give your baby 400 units of vitamin D each day.

If you are returning to work and are breastfeeding:

+You may want to begin expressing milk. You can express milk before a feeding, during a feeding, after a feeding, or in between a feeding – it will not take milk away from your baby.

+You can store milk in plastic or glass – it is your choice. Milk can stay in the freezer for 4 – 6 months.

+Introduce your baby to a bottle. Your baby will probably take a bottle more easily from someone else. You might need to be out of the room so your baby cannot see or hear you. The person feeding your baby may want to try holding your baby in a different position than you use for nursing.

+Babies like different shaped nipples, but you might want to try the “orthodontic” styles first.

+If your baby won't take the bottle, you may want to try while he is sleeping or just as he is starting to wake up.

+Continue to give your baby a bottle about two times a week to help him remember how to feed this way.

If you are planning on expressing milk at work, you may want to purchase or rent an electric breast pump to make expression quicker and easier. You will not need to decrease the frequency of breastfeeding before you return to work.

If you are not planning on expressing milk at work, you should begin eliminating day time feedings several weeks before you will return to work. Start by eliminating the middle of the day feeding for one week – and your breasts will soon make less milk in the middle of the day. Then you can eliminate another feeding without the risk of your breasts becoming engorged.

SAFETY and HEALTHY HABITS

Always place your baby on her back for sleep

Always place your baby in his car seat when traveling by car or taxi

Never leave your baby alone on a high place

Don't drink a hot beverage while holding your baby. She may reach out and knock the drink out of your hand, burning both of you

Never shake your baby

Wash your hands before and after changing diapers.

Discourage people from smoking in your home

Protect your baby from sun exposure by using a hat or blanket

Walking is excellent exercise for new parents – so take your baby for a walk.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Your baby will be offered immunizations at the two month well child visit. Websites that have good information about vaccinations are: www.aap.org
www.vaccine.chop.edu

SIBLINGS

If you have older children, consider reading the Sibling handout from Prescriptions for Parents. This handout has many ideas on how to help your child adjust to being a big brother or sister.

PARENTING

Parenting is difficult and emotionally and physically draining. You and your partner need each other for support, but often parents are not able to pay attention to each other as they are so focused on the new baby. If you and your partner have not had the opportunity to spend some time (even 1 – 2 hours) together without your baby, consider planning a date together now when you can reconnect and re-establish your relationship with each other. Even a brief walk around the block without your baby allows you to convey to each other that you value your relationship.

Used with permission: Jane E. Anderson, M.D. "Prescriptions for Parents"