

Hi. I am your new born baby.

In the coming months and years, I will learn, grow and develop like all children. The most important thing you can do is to be warm, loving and responsive to me. This will help my brain develop and shape the way I learn, think and behave for the rest of my life. I also need you to take care of yourself. If you feel sad or blue, please talk to family, friends or your doctor.

As you get to know me, you will see that I have my own unique personality and my own way of doing things. I may do some things before other babies and I may do some things after them. Be patient. I will get there in my own time.

To help you know what to expect, here are some common milestones most babies reach between birth and 2 months old.

Growth

Weight and Length

- I will lose some weight after birth but I will probably gain it back within two weeks.
- On average, I will gain about 180 to 240 grams (6 to 8 ounces) per week. But some weeks I might gain more and some weeks I might gain less or not gain at all.
- I grow in spurts. I might have a growth spurt when I am about 3 weeks old and when I am about 6 weeks old. During a growth spurt I will want to eat more and will gain more weight.

Head

- I have two soft spots on my head where the bones have not yet grown together.
- The soft spot near the front of my head is probably still soft but is well protected by skin. The soft spot near the back of my head might be closed.
- I might have bumps and bruises on my head and face. These bumps and bruises were caused when I was born and will go away. If you are concerned, talk to our community health nurse or doctor.
- I can hold my head steady but my neck gets tired. Remember to cradle or support my head when you are holding or moving me.

Teeth

- My gums are smooth and pink. I need to have my gums rubbed gently with a damp cloth every day to help keep them clean. This will make tooth brushing easier when my teeth come in since I'll be used to having my mouth cleaned.
- All of my baby teeth and some of my adult teeth have already formed under my gums.
- Good nutrition will help my teeth to grow strong.

Development

Movement

- I was born with some simple reflexes such as searching for a nipple, sucking, swallowing and grasping items that are put in my hand.
- I move my arms and legs when I am awake.

Language

- I cry to tell you that I am hungry, tired, uncomfortable, in pain or lonely. You may learn to recognize my different cries. But be patient. It may take time for us to communicate.
- I make other sounds like grunting, gurgling, sighing, small throaty noises, cooing, laughing and the beginning of babbling.

Hearing

- I have been able to hear since before I was born.
- I might stop moving and listen when I hear a sound.
- Talk to me. I like to hear people's voices, especially my parent's voices.
- I am startled by loud noises.

Vision

- I have been able to see since I was born. I see best when objects are close to me, between 20 and 38 centimeters (8 and 15 inches). Objects far away are still blurry.
- I might turn my head to follow faces and bright objects and can focus on objects close to me.
- I like to look at simple patterns in black and white or bright colors.
- I discover my own hands as I wave them in front of my face.

Sexual Health

Children learn about sexuality daily and continue learning throughout their lives. Sexuality is an awareness of our entire self as a male or female. This is basic to healthy sexual development.

- I am born a sexual being.
- I like to have skin-to-skin contact and lots of cuddling. This helps me develop a healthy attitude about myself and my body.

Behavior and Emotions

Thinking and Feeling

- I have my own temperament. I might be quiet and easy to care for, or I might be more active and demanding. You will soon learn my temperament. But don't be surprised if it changes over time!
- I might smile at you when you talk, play or care for me.
- I am learning that you are my special person and I know when you are around.
- I can feel lonely or scared.
- I learn to feel safe with people when you respond to my needs.

Crying

- I usually cry when I need something. I often cry because I am hungry but I also cry if I am tired, wet, gassy, too hot or too cold, or just lonely. Sometimes I cry just to hear myself cry.
- I know it can be frustrating to hear me cry but please **never** shake me for any reason. Shaking can cause brain damage, blindness, paralysis or even death. Take a break, don't shake.
- Here are some ways you can try to soothe me when I am crying:
 - Feed me. I might still be hungry, even if I just ate.
 - Talk to me quietly and softly.

- Touch my skin and massage my arms and legs.
- Hold my arms against my chest.
- Swaddle me in a blanket.
- Cradle me in your arms and rock me.
- Bicycle my legs.
- If you are concerned about my crying, talk to our community health nurse or doctor.

Sleeping

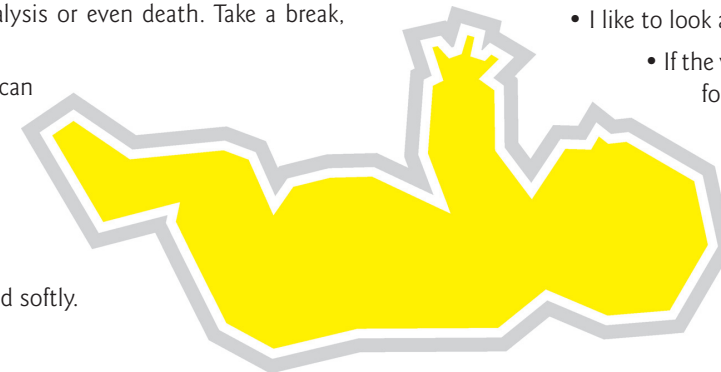
- I usually sleep about 12 to 18 hours a day.
- I might sleep for up to 5 or 6 hours at a time or I might sleep for shorter periods throughout the day and night. If you are concerned about my sleeping, talk to our community health nurse or doctor.
- I should not sleep on my stomach. I am safest when I sleep on my back. Sleeping on my back will help to reduce my risk of sudden infant death syndrome (crib death).

Diapers

- I will wet 6 to 10 diapers a day.
- I might have a bowel movement (poop) after every feeding or I might only poop 2 or 3 times a day. My stools (poop) should be soft.
- If you are concerned about my bowel habits, talk to our community health nurse or doctor.

Playing

- You are my favorite toy! I like it when you talk and sing to me. I also like to be stroked, rocked and cuddled.
- When you play with me, it develops life-long feelings of safety and helps me to learn and grow.
 - I like to look at new and different things.
 - If the weather is okay, I like to go outside for a walk with you.
 - Placing me on my tummy to play helps my neck grow stronger and prevents my head from becoming flat.





Eating

- The only food I need is breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula.
- If I am breastfed, I need a vitamin D supplement. Ask our community health nurse or doctor about supplements.
- I eat at least 8 times a day. Sometimes I might want to eat more often, such as every half hour.
- Hold and cuddle me when you feed me. Please don't prop my bottle and leave me alone. I could choke!

Care

- When I am inside, I need to wear about the same amount of clothes that you wear plus one layer (like a sweater or blanket).
- Clean my bum after every bowel movement (poop).
- I need a full tub-bath at least once or twice a week. You will soon learn what I need to keep my skin clean and healthy.

Keeping Me Safe

I am always changing and learning new things. I depend on you to help keep me safe as I start to explore my world. What is safe one day might not be safe the next day. Get down on your hands and knees and see the world the way I see it, so you can remove possible hazards before I find them.

Most childhood injuries can be predicted and prevented.

Here are some **simple guidelines** to help keep me safe between birth and 2 months old...and beyond.

Falls are the leading cause of hospital visits for childhood injuries

- Never leave me alone in a high place, such as a changing table, bed or sofa, even if I am strapped in. You would be surprised how fast I can move!
- Strap me securely into my stroller or carriage.
- If you use an infant carrier, always strap me securely into the seat. Don't set the carrier down on a counter or other high place when I am in it. I am safest on the floor.

Car Safety

- Put me in an approved child safety seat every time I travel by car. Don't use an infant carrier or bed in place of a child safety seat.
- I am safest in a rear facing child safety seat until my first birthday. Be sure to read the manufacturer's directions – some are only recommended rear facing until I weigh 9 kg (20 pounds) but others not until 16 kg (35 pounds).
- Make sure my child safety seat is properly installed. If you need help installing my child safety seat, talk to our community health nurse.
- Never leave me alone in a vehicle. What you think will take 5 minutes may take much longer. I can become too hot in a vehicle in the summer and too cold during the winter.

Crib Safety

- My crib should have a bolted mattress support, not S-shaped hooks. The space between bars should be no more than 6 centimeters (2³/₈ inches).
- The mattress should fit snugly in my crib, so I can't get trapped between the mattress and the crib bars.
- If someone gave you my crib or you bought it second-hand, check the date it was made. My crib must be made after 1986. That way you will know it meets safety standards.
- Do not use bumper pads, pillows, comforters, or soft toys in my crib. I may accidentally suffocate.

Sun Safety

- Keep me out of direct sunlight. Put a hat on my head and cover most of my body with clothing when I am outside on a sunny day.
- Do not put sunscreen on me until I am 6 months old.

Burns and Scalds

- Be very careful when you eat, drink or carry anything hot when I am close to you.
- If I am bottle feeding, warm my formula in a bowl or cup of hot water. Warming my formula in the microwave may cause hot spots which can burn my mouth. If you use the microwave always shake the bottle and check the temperature before feeding it to me.
- Check that bath water is about body temperature (37°C or 98.6°F) by touching the water with your wrist or elbow. The water should feel warm, not hot or cold.

- Keep hot tap water set at 49°C (120°F). I could burn in one second if the water temperature is hotter than 60°C.

Water Safety

- Always stay with me when I am in the bathtub.
- Always keep one hand on me, even if you are using a bath support or baby tub that keeps my head out of the water.

Choking

- Anything that goes into my mouth, like a soother, should be too big for me to swallow.
- If I use a soother, make sure it has been safety-tested and check it often to make sure it cannot come apart.
- Never hang my soother on a string around my neck. The string could catch on something and strangle me.

Animals and Children

- Animals, even the family pet, can hurt me. Stay with me when animals are around.
- If our cat or dog is in the house when I am sleeping, close my bedroom door.
- My brothers and sisters or other children can hurt me if they don't know how to touch or play with me in a safe way. Stay with me when other children are around.

Fire Safety

- Make sure our house has smoke detectors that work. Check them every month and change the batteries once a year.
- Plan and practice how our family will get out of the house if there is a fire.

Questions?

If you have any questions concerning your child's healthy growth and development, please contact your community health nurse at your local health region office.

Health Link Alberta

Edmonton, call 408-LINK (5465)

Calgary, call 943-LINK (5465)

Outside Edmonton and Calgary local calling areas, call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)

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