



This newsletter provides important information about your baby through infancy and early childhood. You will receive 10 issues of this newsletter before your child reaches age 5. Other publications for parents include *Path to Parenthood* and *Growing Up Healthy*. If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter or are interested in a home visit or other assistance, please call one of the Vermont Department Health district offices listed below:

Barre.....	802-479-4200	Newport.....	802-334-6707
	888-253-8786		800-952-2945
Bennington.....	802-447-3531	Rutland.....	802-786-5811
	800-637-7347		888-253-8802
Brattleboro.....	802-257-2880	St. Albans.....	802-524-7970
	888-253-8805		888-253-8801
Burlington.....	802-863-7323	St. Johnsbury.....	802-748-5151
	888-253-8803		800-952-2936
Middlebury.....	802-388-4644	Springfield.....	802-885-5778
	888-253-8804		888-296-8151
Morrisville.....	802-888-7447	White River Junction	802-295-8820
	888-253-8798		888-253-8799

Your health insurance benefits include many preventive services at no charge to you: regular health check-ups and dental visits; immunizations (shots); vision and hearing checks; and child safety and developmental guidance.

Information in these newsletters was adapted from the following sources: *Touchpoints*, T. Berry Brazelton, MD; *Babytalk*; *Link Letters*, Healthy Steps; *Baby Your Baby*, Utah Department of Health; *Cradle Crier*, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension; *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics; and *Path To Parenthood*, Vermont Department for Children and Families.




growing up healthy

A newsletter from Healthy Babies, Kids & Families

BIRTH TO 4 MONTHS



Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby.

You are probably feeling a wide range of emotions, from extreme

joy to overwhelming responsibility—not to mention complete exhaustion. Even after nine months of pregnancy, nothing can prepare you for actually seeing and holding your baby in your arms.

In the beginning, it may seem like he does nothing but eat, sleep, cry and fill his diapers. But by the end of the first month he'll be much more alert and responsive. In the second month, much of the exhaustion and uncertainty that you felt after his birth will begin to pass. You'll settle into a fairly regular schedule around feeding and naps. And, as he transitions from a totally dependent newborn into an active, responsive infant, you'll experience many joys—like seeing his first smile.

General Development

Although every baby is a unique individual—with a distinct personality and temperament—babies in general grow and develop in predictable ways.

During the first week or two, he may be drowsy and sleep, or fuss and cry if there's too much activity around him. But by the end of the first month, he'll become more curious and pay close attention to human faces and voices—especially yours—and brightly colored patterns. At first he may be sensitive to loud noises. If not supported, his head will flop backwards. And, he might make jerky, quivering movements with his arms.

As he adjusts to his new world, it may help to have a routine during his days and nights. Try to get him into a routine as soon as possible. It may help him to know that when he cries—and he may do this a lot—you will take care of him. Give him lots of time to explore his surroundings on his tummy while he's awake.

By the second month he may gurgle, laugh and even smile when he is happy. He will recognize familiar sights—you, your breast or a bottle, a mobile in a crib—and will get excited when he sees them. He may also recognize and smile at people other than you.

In the third and fourth months, he will be much more alert during the day. He will start to grab things and pull toys and other objects to his mouth. He may lift his head and chest when lying on his stomach and roll from his stomach to back.

Crying

Babies cry to let you know there is a problem. You cannot spoil a baby. Babies learn they can count on you to take care of them. Sometimes it is easy to know why they are crying; sometimes nothing you do seems to work and this can be frustrating. Some babies need a chance to let off steam at the end of the day, especially as they enter new developmental stages. If your baby has a regular fussy period at the same time every day, he may need to cry it out. If your baby is well fed, warm and dry, perhaps you can calm him by talking or singing softly; helping him get his thumb into his mouth; burping him to get rid of trapped air; gently swaddling him by wrapping his body in a light blanket. If the crying becomes too much for you, take a break by letting a partner or friend take over. If nothing seems to help, call your health care provider or the Parents Assistance Line/Vermont 211: 1-800-PARENTS.

Feeding

Your baby may tell you he's hungry by smacking his lips, drooling, turning his head to find a nipple or becoming fussy and finally crying.

If you are breastfeeding, these early weeks can be challenging. Don't be afraid to ask for help—lots of mothers do. Remember; breastfeeding gets much easier after this initial period.

A breastfed baby should nurse whenever he seems hungry. This may seem constant, especially at the beginning. Although you can't tell how much breast milk he's getting. Plenty of wet diapers and a steady weight gain tells you he is getting enough.

A formula fed newborn will take from two to three ounces of formula per feeding and will eat every three to four hours during his first few weeks. Then, your baby should take in about two and a half ounces of formula a day for every pound of body weight. This is just a guide and every baby is different. He will tell you when he has had enough (Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Caring for Your Baby and Young Child).

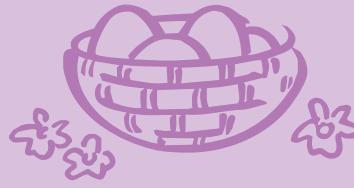
Your baby should continue his diet of breast milk or formula until he is four to six-months old. Don't give cow's milk to babies until they are at least 1 year old.

Sleeping

Newborns sleep anywhere from eight to 20 hours a day.

The older your baby gets, the fewer naps he'll need and the longer he'll sleep at one time.

Soon he'll learn the difference between day and night. Play, sing, talk and do other activities with your baby during the day so he learns it's a time for being awake. Then, keep the evening quieter and dim the lights so he learns it's a time for sleeping. Most babies sleep through the night (for at least 6 to 8 hours) by four-months, but some take longer.



To keep your sleeping baby safe, babies should always sleep alone on their backs in a safety-approved crib. To further reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), use a firm mattress that is closely fitted to the sides of the crib; a tight fitting sheet or covering tucked at the bottom and sides of the crib (not near the baby's head) to keep your baby warm; keep pillows, bumpers and toys out of the crib; and provide a sleep environment that is smoke free.

Being a Parent

A new baby can bring a range of emotions, including extreme joy, total exhaustion and complete uncertainty.

This can be a very stressful time for parenting couples. Caring for an infant, combined with finding time for your older children, cleaning your house and working, can take its toll. Lack of sleep from nights spent feeding, diapering and walking the floor with a crying baby, makes it even harder.

As a new mom, you may feel overwhelmed with the day-to-day demands of caring for your infant along with your other responsibilities at home, work or school. In addition to recovering physically from the birth, you're also getting far less sleep because of the baby's schedule. You may cry, be impatient, irritable, restless or anxious. "Postpartum blues" are common, but if they last for several weeks or are severe, you should talk to your health care provider. You may wonder about the months ahead, hoping that things will become more routine—they will. You may also worry about needing to return to school or work, but just try to take it one day at a time for now.

New dads may feel shut off from the baby and from your attention—especially if you're breastfeeding. One way to help is for fathers to care for the baby in other ways (such as changing diapers, dressing or bathing) and play with him as much as they can. Spending time with their infant will strengthen their own special bond with the baby. It's also important for dads to spend extra time with your older children, who also may be having a hard time adjusting to the new baby.

Returning to Work



If you are going back to work, this period will be additionally challenging. Maybe a friend or relative will take care of your baby, or you have found an in-home child care or child care center. Whatever you've arranged, leaving your baby on the first day will be hard. Feeling positive about the place you're leaving him will make it easier. A quality child care experience can enhance a child's growth and development. If you need help finding child care, call the child care resource and referral agency in your area, call the Child Development Division at 1-800-649-2642, or visit www.brightfuturesinfo.org.

Many working women are still able to breastfeed. If you want to continue to breastfeed and need additional support, please contact your local Vermont Department of Health office. Breastfeeding can be a real advantage to working parents—in addition to all the other benefits, breastfed babies are sick less often than formula fed babies.

Environmental Spotlight: Water

Water can contain hard to detect pollutants that have no taste, odor or color. Children can be more sensitive to unsafe water than adults, because their bodies are still growing and their immune systems still developing.

Public (town or city) water is tested regularly. If you use a private water supply—like a well for your drinking water—you need to make sure it's safe for your family. Even though wells are designed to provide clean and safe water, they can become contaminated.

Safe drinking water is important—you will be using a lot of it for formula, or drinking extra amounts yourself if you breastfeed. For more information, call:

Vermont Office of
Environmental Health
1-800-439-8550

Keeping Your Baby Safe

Below are several things to keep in mind so your baby stays safe:

- Always provide support for your baby's head; never shake your baby for any reason.
- Secondhand smoke is very dangerous to your baby. Babies of parents who smoke have more ear infections, runny noses and may develop lung diseases, like bronchitis and pneumonia, and have an increased risk of SIDS (see above).
- Make sure that your baby always rides in an approved car safety seat—if used correctly, they reduce traffic deaths among young children by over 70 percent. For more information, call 1-888-TOT-SEAT or 1-888-868-7328.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after diaper changes.
- Make sure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and working properly.
- Keep the baby out of direct sunlight.
- Don't drink hot liquids or smoke while holding your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone with young siblings or a pet.
- Set your water heater at 130 degrees or less so it won't scald or harm your baby by accident.
- Always keep one hand on your baby when he is on high places such as changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs.

Immunizations

Childhood diseases can be very serious, especially to young infants. It is very important to make sure that he gets all vaccines recommended throughout childhood.

For more information about when your baby will receive these and other important vaccines, talk to your health care provider.

