



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.

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103 South Main Street
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DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES




growing up healthy

A newsletter from Healthy Babies, Kids & Families

8 TO 12 MONTHS



Your baby is now—or soon will be—on the move.

He's curious about everything and you'll have your hands full keeping him safe. This is an important time to make sure

your house is fully childproofed, and begin setting limits for your baby.

As your baby grows and learns new skills, his eating and sleeping patterns might change. Over these next couple of months, your child will probably learn to crawl, pull himself up to a standing position, and may even take a few steps. He is changing from a baby into a toddler, and this development may be challenging as well as exciting.

General Development

Your baby will continue to grow quickly during this period. By his first birthday, the average baby triples in weight.

When lying on a flat surface, he is often in constant motion. Because of this, it's especially dangerous to put him on a couch or bed. Be very careful while using the changing table that he doesn't roll off.

Your baby is probably sitting without support and will soon learn to roll down onto his stomach and get back up into a sitting position. He will then start crawling or creeping, pulling up to a stand, cruising along furniture, and finally taking his first steps.

Your baby will like dropping things and watching them fall, poking and exploring things with his index finger, and picking things up using his thumb and index finger.

As long as you're still in sight, he'll enjoy crawling off to explore everything. He'll love "peek-a-boo" and other simple games. He'll copy your movements, such as clapping hands, patting the highchair, and waving hello or good-bye. He will also enjoy reading simple books with you and looking at the pictures. At this age, he likes routines—they make him feel safe.

Early Discipline

Your baby's increased mobility brings about new challenges for you. He'll be into everything possible, so you'll need to start saying an occasional "No." Distraction is the best way to deal with most situations. Show him a new toy or get him into another activity, like looking out the window or reading a book.

When you need to say "No," do it in more serious situations that could hurt your baby—like catching him playing with an electric cord—and always be consistent in how you respond. Your baby's not trying to be bad. He's just exploring; this is part of normal development. Remember to always act quickly and in the same way every time—it'll take a while before your baby learns what's okay and what's not.

The most important part of early discipline is catching your child being good. Let him know how much you appreciate the positive things he does. Praise him.

Sleeping

Even though your baby might have been sleeping through the night, he may now start refusing to go to bed, and may even wake up looking for you. Putting him to bed in the same way each night will be especially important.

If he does wake up, wait for several minutes (up to ten),

then check on him and let him know you are there. Turning on the light, taking him out of the crib or feeding him might start a regular habit of waking.

Feeding

At this age, babies can begin to feed themselves with their fingers and even try to use a spoon. Good finger foods include: small pieces of toast, pasta, cheese, chicken, cooked vegetables and soft fruits. If you haven't already, introduce your baby to drinking from a cup.



Try to feed him when the rest of the family is eating, so he can begin to take part in this special family routine. Let him tell you when he's had enough and is ready to get moving again—that's the time to take him out of the high chair.

Needing You

Until now, your child may have gone to anyone who wanted to hold him. In the next few months your baby may go through a period when he seems to need and want only you. When "strangers" approach he may get quiet, look away, cling and cry. This is often called "stranger anxiety."

He may also cling and cry when he realizes you are leaving. This is frequently called "separation anxiety" and means he is beginning to realize he is a separate person, which is a little scary at first.

Extra preparation will be needed before you leave your baby but slowly he will learn that you are there even when he can't see you. Help him find a favorite stuffed toy that can be comforting when you leave. Ask visitors or strangers to give him time to warm up.

Safety

Safety concerns grow with your baby's increasing ability to move around. He is crawling everywhere and likes to grab objects and put them in his mouth. Below are some important safety rules to follow:

- ◆ Keep small and/or sharp objects out of baby's reach; babies should not play with anything smaller than a half dollar (1¼ inches).
- ◆ Install safety plugs or outlet covers in wall sockets.
- ◆ Lower the crib mattress as your baby begins to sit and stand.
- ◆ Make sure all household cleaners, medicines, and other hazardous substances are kept up and out of reach or in locked cabinets.
- ◆ Install baby gates at the top of stairs or across open doorways to prevent baby from falling or entering unsafe areas.
- ◆ Make sure plastic bags, telephone cords and mini-blind or drapery curtain cords are away from baby.
- ◆ Secure bookshelves and/or other furniture to the wall as your baby may try to climb them.
- ◆ Use sunscreen and put a hat on your baby every time he goes out whether it is cloudy or sunny.



Language

The coos, gurgles and screeches of earlier months now sound more like "bas," "das" and "mas." Soon he'll begin to use a sound to mean a specific object, such as "ba" to mean ball, or "da" to mean dog. He also can understand a lot of what you say, so talk to him throughout the day. And don't be surprised if you mention a familiar thing—like a favorite toy or book—and he brings it to you.

Environmental Spotlight: Lead

Now that your baby is crawling and trying to put everything in his mouth, it's important to think about lead. Lead is a metal that can be found in paint (both chips and dust) in houses built before 1978, in old water pipes, old ceramic cookware, and some work clothing.

Swallowing or breathing lead can permanently damage a child's brain and kidneys. Even small amounts of lead can cause serious learning and behavior problems. To reduce this danger:

- Learn how to repair painted surfaces safely.
- Wash your child's toys and hands often.
- Don't let your child put his mouth on painted windowsills.
- Let your water run for one minute each morning before using it.
- When you cook, always start with cold water—warm or hot water takes in more lead from the pipes.
- Provide a healthy diet for your child with plenty of vitamin C, calcium and iron. They keep lead from being absorbed in the body. These nutrients are in meat, beans, green leafy vegetables, milk, cheese, broccoli and orange juice.

Your baby should be tested for lead at his 12 month well child visit.

For more information about lead and lead poisoning, talk to your health care provider (your family doctor, nurse practitioner or clinic) or call:

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

Teeth

You can take a few important steps to protect your baby's smile. In addition to using them to chew food, baby teeth help with eating, speech, self-esteem and to hold space for adult teeth.



Use only water if you give your baby a bottle at bedtime or naps. Know if there is fluoride in your water, which helps to prevent tooth decay. When your child's teeth appear, begin to use a small soft brush and a very small amount of fluoride toothpaste. Let him try to use the brush first; then take your "turn" to properly clean the teeth. Schedule baby's first visit to a dentist by their first birthday, or as recommended by his health care provider. For questions about your baby's oral health, call 1-888-9VT-Smile or visit www.smilevt.org

Siblings

At this age your baby may want to play with his older brothers and sisters. Some toy sharing can be dangerous. Older siblings' toys may have small and easily swallowed pieces that could pose a safety hazard for a small baby.

While you want to encourage your older kids to share as much as possible, explain to them that some toys are not appropriate for the baby. Ask them to keep these toys out of the baby's reach. You may also want to help your older children find a safe place for the special toys they do not want to share with the baby.

Plan fun activities for your children to do together, like looking at books, singing songs, rolling a ball back and forth, or playing peek-a-boo.

