



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

12 TO 18 MONTHS



Congratulations! Your baby is well on her way to becoming a toddler.

To her, the world is a new and wonderful place to be, and this is a time of rapid development. She is either walking or about to

walk—she'll be very focused on this in the months to come. She is a great imitator, and will try to do whatever she sees you doing. She'll also be interested in exploring everything possible. Safety is still a primary concern; it will be important to continue setting limits for her.

General Development

By 12 months, your baby may have tripled her birth weight. She may be sleeping 12 to 14 hours at night, and refusing one of her two daily naps. Some babies, who didn't nap much the first year, may start one longer nap at this time, due to increased activity.

She may be trying just a step or two on her own or she may actually be walking. If she isn't toddling around yet, don't worry—the range of what's considered normal is anywhere from 9 to 18 months. As long as she's doing some combination of standing, stepping, and cruising—with or without holding on to something—she is well on her way.

At this age, some children have many words they can say, some only have a few. Most usually understand more words than they can say. While she'll understand simple commands and the word "No," she may test you by doing what she wants anyway. An immediate and consistent response from you will teach her that you mean what you say.

Practice and imitation are important learning tools for a 12-month-old. You may find she's doing the same thing over and over again. She'll also copy what you are doing—from combing her hair to "talking" on the phone. She will be very interested in body parts—especially the face—so it's a good time to start naming "nose," "eyes," "mouth" and letting her point to them.

She enjoys stacking blocks, nesting objects, and dumping games, as well as scribbling on paper with big crayons.

Sleeping

With every new spurt in development, your baby's sleep routine may be interrupted and she may start waking in the middle of the night. Continue to help her learn to get herself back to sleep. Keep up the bedtime routine. If crying lasts for more than ten minutes, go in, reassure her everything is okay, pat her back, and then leave. This will encourage her to develop her own self-comforting routine and get back to sleep on her own.

Setting Limits

Your baby's interested in everything—including stairs, bathroom drawers, kitchen cabinets, the garage, electrical cords, plants, and as many of her older siblings things as she can get to. Think about what areas of your house are particularly dangerous and still need to be childproofed, and the items you may need to put away for awhile.

If you can, create safe areas for your child to explore. Put wooden spoons, plastic containers and other baby-friendly items in a kitchen cabinet that she can reach.

If you can, ignore behavior that is annoying but not harmful, and always reward your baby when she does good

things. Your attention is her most important reward, so use it to encourage good behavior.

Safety

After your baby starts to walk, she'll begin to run, climb, jump and explore everything possible—it will be more challenging than ever to keep her safe. Pay particular attention to the following:

- ◆ Make sure medicines have secured safety caps and that they and household cleaners are kept in locked cabinets.
- ◆ Keep the poison control phone number by your phone: **1-800-222-1222**.
- ◆ Your walking baby will fall; make sure that doors to dangerous areas are locked, gates are blocking stairways, and, if possible, that sharp-edged furniture is removed from the rooms she is in.
- ◆ Keep her away from kitchen dangers including hot oven doors or burners, drawers with knives, cleaning solutions or chemicals.
- ◆ Make sure your baby is never left alone—even for a minute—near a bathtub, pail of water, wading or swimming pool, or any other water. She can drown in the most shallow water.
- ◆ Use a car safety seat every time she is in the car.

Feeding

Your baby probably enjoys eating finger foods. Select food from the following food groups: meat (beef, chicken, fish, eggs, beans), milk (milk, cheese, yogurt, and other milk products), fruits and vegetables, and breads and cereals (including rice and pasta). Continue to give her a spoon to practice with. Let her eat as much or as little as she wants. Don't be surprised if your baby's appetite drops dramatically sometime during this



period. This will continue for the next year or two and is normal.

It's important for your baby to eat as well as possible during mealtime. Limiting mealtime distractions by having the family eat together, and turning off the television can help. Offer healthy snacks between meals.

Most health care providers (your family doctor, nurse practitioner or clinic) recommend that the bottle be given up around age one, and certainly by 18 months. When you wean your baby, try eliminating the midday bottle first, then the evening and morning ones. By this time she should be used to cups, and should even be drinking milk from a cup at mealtime.

Many babies continue to breastfeed past age 1. The decision of when to wean from the breast is up to each mom and baby.

Temper Tantrums

Beginning at this age, many babies start having temper tantrums, which can challenge even the most confident parent. As difficult as they may be, tantrums are a normal way for your baby to deal with conflict. Support but not interference is the way to help your child.

To prevent tantrums, try the following:

- When you ask your toddler to do something, say "Please" and "Thank you."
- Always reward good behavior with praise and attention.
- She will say "No" a lot; choose your battles carefully.
- Let her make choices whenever possible.
- A tired or overstimulated child is at highest risk for tantrums.



Environmental Spotlight: Pesticides

The biggest danger to children is poisoning from eating or drinking pesticides that have not been properly handled or stored. Pesticides are used to kill or repel insects, rodents, unwanted plants, or bacteria and viruses that can be harmful to people. They can cause many health problems, including skin irritation and burning, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory problems (including asthma), cancers, memory and concentration problems, paralysis, convulsions and in rare cases, death. Below are some things you can do to keep your child safe:

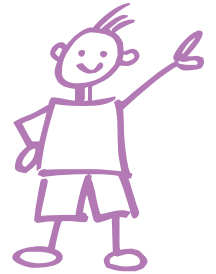
- Make sure all pesticides are out of children's reach and are stored in a locked place, and let your children know they are poisonous.
- Explore other ways to control pests, like insects and rodents, by keeping food containers and garbage covered, eliminating water sources, using screens on windows and doors, and keeping your house as clean as possible.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables well before eating them.

If you must use pesticides, try to buy products labeled "Caution." These are lower in toxicity than those labeled "Warning" or "Danger." Always read and follow the label directions very carefully. Always wash your hands after use. Never allow young children to apply repellents themselves. To protect children against mosquitoes, have them wear long sleeved shirts, pants, and socks during evening, nighttime and dawn hours when mosquitoes are most actively feeding.

Pesticides should only be used as a last resort; always use the least toxic chemical for the job. For more information on pesticides, call the Vermont Department of Agriculture at 802-828-2431, the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs at 1-800-535-PEST, or the National Pesticide Information Center at 1-800-858-7378.

Siblings

At this age, older brothers and sisters begin to play an important role in your baby's life. She will try to imitate their play and speech, and will learn a great deal from them. This may also be the time they start to find her difficult to deal with because she goes after their things. They may also be jealous because she takes up so much of your time. Encourage older brothers and sisters to share and play with the baby, but also help them find places to keep their special toys safe and time to play alone.



Continue to set aside time alone with your older children each week. Your affection and attention is very important to them and to you.

Language

By 18 months of age, your baby will probably be able to say eight to 20 words you can understand. She will say "hi" or "bye," and will like to say "oh-oh." She will also understand and follow simple directions. It is more important than ever to talk to her and listen to what she says. Books are very important and help to introduce new words and language to your baby—lift the flap books are especially fun.

Toilet Training? Not Yet.

You may start thinking about toilet training and dream of no more diapers but it is still too early. It will be easier if you wait for him to show he is ready to use the toilet. Listed below are signs to watch for.

- ▲ Staying dry for at least 2 hours at a time
- ▲ Waking up dry after naps
- ▲ Following simple directions
- ▲ Has bowel movements around the same time each day
- ▲ Lets you know that he is about to have a bowel movement
- ▲ Is uncomfortable in dirty diapers
- ▲ Can pull his pants up and down

