

Happy Healthy Baby

Everyone needs to be active, even babies. Your baby needs good nutrition and plenty of daily activity. Learning begins with play, so play with your baby every day!

What Kinds of Play Do Babies Like?

- Taking things in and out of containers.
- Crawling over, under and around things (pillows, chairs, boxes).
- Playing with things that are different shapes, colors and sizes.
- Gently turning, rolling, bouncing and swaying your baby is a great way to build your baby's strength and to help him or her to learn.



Caution: Never shake your baby. This can cause brain damage.

A Fun Activity to Do With Your Baby:

Around six months old, sit with your baby on your lap, facing you. While holding hands, encourage your infant to stand. Once your baby is standing, sway your baby from side to side.

Games to Play:

- Singing and clapping
- Peek-a-boo
- Pat-a-cake
- Blowing bubbles for baby to pop

Get your baby out of the crib, playpen or infant seat and let him/her move!

Things to Play With:

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| Spoons | Plastic bowls |
| Plastic cups | Empty baskets or boxes |
| Mobiles | Soft blocks |
| Soft balls | Rattles |

Feed Your Baby Right

Avoid foods that can choke your baby, such as hotdogs, bologna, sausage, nuts, seeds, snack chips, cheese puffs and pretzels. Babies who are overfed or do not get enough activity can become overweight.

Here's what you can do to make your baby happy and healthy:

- Breastfed babies are less likely to become obese adults.
- Do not force your baby to finish a bottle or baby foods.
- Wait to begin baby cereal and baby foods until four to six months of age.
- Feed with a spoon, not an infant feeder.
- Give baby fruits, vegetables, and meats rather than baby food desserts and dinners.
- Avoid sweet tea, soda pop, KoolAid or other sweetened drinks.

Start introducing a cup when the baby is around six to eight months old. Offer the cup before the bottle and place it within easy reach. Continue with this approach daily, but do not put any pressure if your baby pushes the cup away. Eventually, he or she will begin drinking from the cup.

Hunger is not the only reason a baby cries. Sometimes babies just want attention or comfort.

Safety Tips

Babies need a safe environment:

- Pick up any small items that baby could choke on or swallow.
- Never leave a baby alone in a room except when safely placed in a play pen, crib or other safe enclosure, and then only for a few minutes.
- Never leave your baby alone near water or in a tub.
- Be certain that whoever is caring for your child is alert to any danger and knows how to avoid it.
- Don't put baby in a walker. Walkers can cause head injuries and do not help motor development.

Kick the Smoking Habit

Babies who are exposed to smoke are twice as likely to suffer illness. Reduce your baby's risk by keeping him or her away from cigarette smoke.

Babies Need Sleep

Babies need at least 14 to 16 hours of sleep every 24 hours. Sleep habits will change as the baby gets older. Even older infants may wake at least once during the night. Try and aim for several naps a day to promote healthful sleep habits.

Breastfeeding

Research has proven that breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits to infants. Some of these benefits include lowering risks of health problems including:

- Infant mortality
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Gastrointestinal infections
- Type one and type two diabetes
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Childhood leukemia
- Lower respiratory tract diseases
- Middle-ear infections
- Atopic dermatitis

Lower risks for these diseases can continue throughout the baby's lifetime.

For more information, call your local WIC clinic or call the WIC State Office at **1-800-545-6747**.



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