MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WIC
Women, Infants & Children Program

Happy Healthy Baby
HAPPY HEALTHY BABY

Everyone needs to be active—even babies. Your baby needs good nutrition and plenty of daily activity and play. 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 to learn.

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

A FUN ACTIVITY TO DO WITH YOUR BABY:

Around 6 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 move!

THINGS TO PLAY WITH:
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 4 to 6 months of age.

- Feed with a spoon, not an infant feeder.

- Give baby food fruits, vegetables, and meats rather than baby food desserts and dinners.

- Avoid sweet tea, soda pop, Kool-Aid, or other sweetened drinks.

Start introducing a cup when the baby is around 6 to 8 months old. Begin to offer the cup before the bottle, and place it within his reach. Continue with this approach daily, but do not put any pressure if he pushes the cup away. Eventually, he 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 deposited 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 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 child 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.
For more information, stop by your local health department, or call the Mississippi Health Department WIC office at 1-800-545-6747.

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