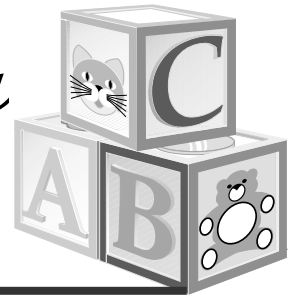


You and Your Baby

Month 5



Baby's Safety & Health

It's time to safeguard your treasures and your baby. Your little one will not be confined to one location much longer. His increasing motor skills and curiosity make the whole house a playground; make sure it is a safe one. The most dangerous rooms in the house are the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. Baby-proof your house by putting up high or locking up breakable or dangerous items. You may feel silly, but it's worth it to crawl—yes, crawl—all around your house (especially in the three rooms mentioned). When you are on the baby's level, you see everything in a different perspective.

Look for and remove anything you would not want your baby to touch, grab, taste, or swallow. Remember to check behind furniture, in cabinets, and under tables. Safety gates may be needed at stairs to prevent tumbles. Buy a bottle of ipecac and post the number of your Poison Control Center at the telephone. A baby-care book may offer other suggestions for creating a safe but interesting home.

When baby starts to lean forward out of his infant seat—and you're afraid he'll tip over—it's time for a high chair. Here are some things to look for, to be sure the high chair is safe for your baby:

- Sturdy with a wide base so it won't tip easily.
- Seat belt with a crotch strap to go between baby's legs to keep him from sliding out.

- Tray should lock securely on both sides, with no sharp edges.
- Belt buckles and tray locks are easy for you to use, but not easy for your baby to use.
- Seat is not slippery. If it is, rubber bathtub stickers work great to keep him from sliding around.
- High chair is at least 12 inches away from the counter or table when baby is in it. Baby could push off and tip over.
- Watch baby closely when he is in the high chair. It is easy for babies to slip down between the leg straps and strangle.
- Be sure baby does not stand up in the high chair.
- Be sure not to let other children climb on the high chair.



Family Focus

Have you noticed how much your baby moves? Most infants move a lot — kicking, swinging, creeping, and trying to crawl. Allow your baby some exercise on the floor several times each day. Play an active game on a blanket, or give him an interesting toy while you supervise the fun.



New moms need daily exercise, too. You may have started exercising to help you regain your pre-pregnant figure. If you haven't, check with your doctor to make sure you can start. Research shows walking is one of the best all-over exercises. You may surprise yourself at the speed you can work up behind a stroller. You need daily exercise just as much as you need

nutritious food, sleep, and rest and relaxation every day. This does not just apply to new mothers! Fathers and children need daily exercise, too! Make exercise a family affair.

Hopefully the whole family is finding time to enjoy the new baby. It is essential that each parent spend time alone to develop a special relationship with the baby. Believe it or not, how you relate now with your baby can influence your child's successes as far away as his high school years. Rewards can also come when you know you're doing a good job of being a parent.

For your baby — the fun, the security, and the warmth that your baby feels result when you take a moment to notice the actions, gestures, and words that satisfy your baby's needs. The squeals, the cuddles, the babbling sounds are the outward signs of these important inner feelings. Keep watching for and responding to your baby's cues that say "I love you."

In nurturing families, self-concept is high; communication is direct, clear, and honest; rules are flexible and subject to change; when trouble arises, the families face it with hope. Try to provide a nurturing family for your children.

Baby's Development

Physical

Your baby is really becoming active now! Your baby can -

- probably roll from side to side



and might even be able to go from his tummy to his back.

- stand up if you hold him under the arms, jump up and down and stamp his feet.
- may be getting teeth - usually, the two lower front teeth are first.
- turn his head in all directions.
- lift his head forward when he is on his back, and grab his feet with his hands.
- sit up for about 15 minutes with his head and back straight if you support his body.
- put things in his mouth.
- splash and kick with his hands and feet in the bath.

Put your baby on his tummy and hold up a toy for him to follow with his eyes. This helps him learn to roll over. Blow soap bubbles for him to follow with his eyes. Read nursery rhymes. Babies like to listen to your voice.

Mental

Your baby can -

- babble and imitate sounds, cough and click his tongue for long periods of time.
- coo, grin or squeal with joy when you talk to him.
- make sounds like ee, ah, ooh, dada, bye-bye, mama.
- remember things for about five seconds.
- remember important people, like his parents, from night to morning or even longer.
- know if something is near or far.

Social/Emotional:

Your baby can get excited when he has fun. Everything is a game. He will cry and get mad when you stop paying attention to him or take a toy away. Your baby:

- loves to see himself in the mirror.
- likes some people, and is shy or scared of others.

- has grown emotionally. He can now feel fear, anger, and disgust. He shows anticipation by waving and raising his arms to be picked up and will cling to you when you hold him.

In this five-month stage, your baby is learning to trust or distrust. Make sure that he is receiving plenty of positive attention and care so that he will learn to look at the world as being a positive and warm place in which to live. Love and dependability on your part as a parent encourage your child to grow into a trusting individual.

Baby's Food

Offer your baby water or juices to drink, but avoid other types of drinks such as soft drinks, tea, or coffee. There are no beneficial nutrients that will help him grow and can be harmful.



This information sheet is one in a series titled You and Your Baby. Contact your county Extension office for more information on you and your baby. Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics provides educational reading material:

American Academy of Pediatrics • P.O. Box 747 • Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0747 OR www.aap.org

www.ext.msstate.edu

Revised by **Louise E. Davis, Ph.D.**, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist, and **Linda S. Patterson, R.N., M.S.N.**, Extension Health Education Specialist
Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.

Information Sheet 1375

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914.
RONALD A. BROWN, Director (rev-3M-4-00)

