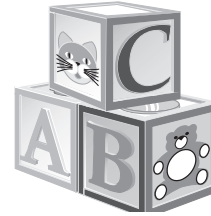


You and Your Baby

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 breakable or dangerous items up high or locking them up.

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 from 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.

Post the toll-free number for the Poison Control Center by your phone: 1-800-222-1222. A baby-care book may offer other suggestions for creating a safe but interesting home.

When your 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. A safe high chair—

- is sturdy with a wide base so it won't tip easily.
- has a seat belt with a strap to go between your baby's legs to keep him from sliding out.
- has a tray that locks securely on both sides, with no sharp edges.
- has belt buckles and tray locks that are easy for you to use, but not easy for your baby to use.
- has a seat that is not slippery. If it is, rubber bathtub stickers work well to keep your baby from sliding around.
- is at least 12 inches away from the counter or table when your baby is in it. Otherwise, the 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 your baby does not stand up in the high chair, and don't let other children climb on it.

For more information on home safety, read Extension Publication 2322 Home Safety for Children.

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-pregnancy figure. If you haven't, check with your doctor to make sure you can start. Research shows walking is one of the best 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.

Your baby feels happy, secure, and loved 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; and when trouble arises, the families face it with hope. Try to provide a nurturing family for your children.



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Baby's Development

Physical

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

- probably roll from side to side and possibly roll from her tummy to her back.
- stand up, jump up and down, and stamp her feet if you hold her under her arms.
- be getting teeth (usually the two lower front teeth are first).
- turn her head in all directions.
- lift her head forward when she is on her back, and grab her feet with her hands.
- sit up for about 15 minutes with her head and back straight if you support her body.
- put things in her mouth.
- splash with her hands and kick her feet in the bathtub.

Put your baby on her tummy and hold up a toy for her to follow with her eyes. This helps her learn to roll over.

Blow soap bubbles for her to follow with her eyes. Read nursery rhymes. Your baby likes 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, and mama.
- remember things for about 5 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 she has fun.

Everything is a game. She will cry and get mad when you stop paying attention to her or take a toy away.

Your baby—

- loves to see herself in the mirror.
- likes some people, and is shy or scared of others.
- has grown emotionally. She can now feel fear, anger, and disgust. She shows anticipation by waving and raising her arms to be picked up. She will cling to you when you hold her.

In this 5-month stage, your baby is learning to trust or distrust. Make sure that she is receiving plenty of positive attention and care so that she 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 juice to drink, but avoid other types of drinks such as soft drinks, tea, or coffee. These have no beneficial nutrients that will help your baby grow, and they can be harmful.



*This information sheet is one in a series called **You and Your Baby**. Contact your county Extension office or visit www.childcaremississippi.org for more information on you and your baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics also provides educational reading materials at www.healthychildren.org.*



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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. MELISSA J. MIXON, Interim Director (POD-05-10)