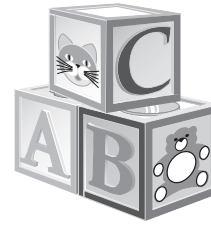


# You and Your Baby

## Months 7 and 8



### Baby's Safety & Health

Baby depends on you for her safety! Developing safe habits now will protect your child while she is too young to learn about danger:

- Keep the bathroom doors closed, and get rid of your large mop buckets. Babies can drown in a toilet or mop bucket.
- Remember to use safety gates on stairs, and keep those electrical outlets covered.
- Keep auto and cleaning supplies, chemicals, and medicines out of reach or locked up.

It is also time to examine your child safety seat for wear and tear and to make sure it still fits. Your baby's neck still needs the support of a rear-facing child safety seat, so don't graduate to a booster seat until she is older and weighs at least 40 pounds.

See *You and Your Baby Month 4* (Information Sheet 1374) for more on car seat safety. For more information on selecting and using child safety seats, check with your health department, NHTSA Vehicle Safety Hotline (1-888-327-4236), American Academy of Pediatrics (1-847-434-4000), or the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (1-800-638-2772).

### Family Focus

#### *Stress Management*

If you are feeling overwhelmed as a new parent, try these tips:

- Talk out your feelings calmly and patiently.
- Take 10. Stop, breathe, and count to 10.
- Ask a friend or relative to stay with the baby while you take a break.
- Ask for HELP when you need it.
- Recognize things that cause you stress—
  - Too little time.
  - Too many decisions.
  - Housework.
  - Phone calls.
  - Family interference.
- Use your time wisely.

### Baby's Development

#### *Physical*

Your baby—

- Crawls backward and forward on his stomach.
- Pulls up by holding onto furniture but has difficulty getting back down.
- Stands up if leaning against something.
- Appears to dance when held in a standing position. This is the first stepping reaction.
- Sits for several minutes without any support.
- Grabs for things and can hold them with his thumb and first and second fingers.
- Likes to grab, shake, and bang objects and put them in his mouth.
- Holds onto a toy, such as a rattle, for several minutes.
- Picks up small things such as pieces of string.
- Feeds himself finger foods.
- Keeps his diaper dry for a longer period of time.

Your baby must learn to trust himself and his own body before he learns to crawl or stand. Many babies will begin to creep during month 8, and some will crawl. A few active babies may even learn to stand.

Most babies will begin experimenting with standing. Starting in a seated position, most babies will draw their knees in toward their chests and pull on a crib side or chair into a squatting position. They will be unsteady at this point, not quite standing or sitting. Most babies will eventually try pulling up by moving one hand over the other until they are standing at full height. This will take awhile.

After your baby learns to stand, he has to learn to sit down. This may take several weeks, and you can expect many banged heads and bottoms. You can help give your baby the idea of sitting by moving his body into a sitting position as he would need to do himself.

#### *Social/Emotional*

By this time, your baby responds socially and emotionally in several ways. Your baby—

- makes sounds to let you know when she is happy, sad, or scared.



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- is still afraid of new experiences and new people—she likes for you to stay close by.
- gets upset when her parents leave, even if it is for a short time. She feels relieved when you return.
- is upset when people make a lot of fuss.
- gets frustrated or loses her temper when she can't find something.
- still babbles a lot and shouts to get attention.
- likes to pat and kiss her reflection in the mirror.
- loves to imitate people she knows.
- wants to be included in family activities.
- is excited to see pictures of other babies.

### *Mental*

Your baby—

- is curious and wants to explore everything.
- knows how to solve simple problems, such as making a toy bell ring.
- understands the meaning of “in” and “out.”
- remembers events that just happened.
- says two-syllable sounds such as choo-choo, da-da, and ma-ma.
- recognizes some words.
- watches and tries to imitate parents' mouth movements.
- turns and listens when she hears familiar sounds such as the telephone or her name.

### **Food**

Now that your baby is 7 or 8 months old and may have some teeth, you can fork-mash vegetables and fruits. Mash a favorite vegetable thoroughly with a fork, or use a potato masher for mashing foods such as ripe bananas, cooked apples, winter squash, white or sweet potatoes, and carrots.

Make sure the food contains no lumps, pieces of skin, strings, or seeds. The consistency will be a little thicker than pureed food.

Soft-cooked meats are good for your baby, too, but do not give her fried meats or pieces of meat sticks or hot dogs. Trim all the fat from the meat, and mash it thoroughly with a fork.

Cooked foods may be strained through a fine mesh sieve or strainer. A sieve is also useful for steam-cooking small amounts of food for your baby. Be sure all food particles are removed when you wash the strainer. You may also want to try pureeing foods.

**Do not feed honey to your baby during her first year. Honey may carry botulism spores that can harm her.**

### *Food DO NOTs*

- DO NOT use leftovers to make baby foods. Leftover foods are likely to have higher levels of bacterial contamination than freshly prepared foods.
- DO NOT feed your baby raw eggs or raw milk. These raw foods may be sources of infections that can be dangerous for her.
- DO NOT feed your baby chunky foods such as corn, nuts, popcorn, and seeds, or coarse-textured foods like cookies that crumble easily. These foods are difficult for your baby to eat, and they may make her choke.
- DO NOT be afraid to serve foods cold. Most babies will accept cold food. If you want to warm your baby's food, do it just before serving.
- DO NOT add salt, sugar, or seasonings to your baby's food. Foods that taste bland to an adult are a new-taste experience for an infant. Some sodium is necessary for good health, but there is enough natural sodium in foods. Added salt provides too much sodium for a small baby and can be harmful.

Remember, with a little patience, you can help your baby appreciate a variety of tastes and textures in new foods.



*This information sheet is one in a series called **You and Your Baby**. Contact your county Extension office or visit [www.childcaremississippi.org](http://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](http://www.healthychildren.org).*



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**Information Sheet 1377**

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)