



THE FIRST MONTH

CONGRATULATIONS ON BABY'S ARRIVAL!

I bet it seems that all your baby does right now is eat (almost constantly), sleep, cry and 'poop'. But don't lose hope! By the end of this month, your baby will be much more alert and responsive. You will realize that he listens when you speak, watches you as you hold him, and occasionally moves his own body to respond to you or attract your attention. Let's look at the exciting things that will happen during this first month of getting to know your baby.

1. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & GROWTH

Your baby was born with too much water on board. That is why he lost about 10% of his birth weight. By the two week visit he will hopefully have regained this weight.

Now he is growing at a very rapid rate. Imagine doubling your weight in 5 months - that's a lot of eating! On average your newborn will gain approximately 2/3 of an ounce per day initially. He will grow approximately 1-1 ½ inches during this month.

Babies initially hold their bodies in a tightly curled position, but over this month, he will begin to stretch his arms and legs and occasionally arch his back. His feet and legs may continue to turn inward giving a bowlegged appearance. This will usually correct itself over the next 6 months.

Your baby's head will also regain its normal shape over this month (especially if there was a lot of molding at birth). Those red marks over his eyelids (if present) will also begin to fade.

I bet you didn't think you would have to deal with pimples again until your child was a teenager, BUT at around 3-5 weeks your baby may get his first outbreak of infantile acne. This is related to stimulation of the oil glands in the skin by the maternal hormones that crossed the placenta.

2. REFLEXES

Most of your baby's activities in the first few weeks are reflexive. You will have to see most of these reflexes over the next few weeks.

- **Rooting and Sucking Reflex** - Your baby will automatically turn his head toward you if you stimulate the side of his face. Placing something in his mouth will automatically cause him to suck.
- **Moro Reflex** - If your baby's head changes position suddenly, or he hears a loud noise he may have a startle reaction with throwing out his arms and legs and extending his neck. This disappears after 2-3 months.
- **Tonic Neck Reflexes** - This is often called the fencing reflex. If your baby's head is turned to one side quickly, he may extend the arm on that side and flex his other arm behind his head as if he is fencing.
- **Palmar/Plantar Grasp Reflex** - This is the reflex we love! Place your finger in your baby's palm and he will hold on with all his might. If you press on his sole, he will also curl his toes tightly.
- **Stepping Reflex** - And you thought your baby couldn't walk until a year. Until approximately 2 months, if your baby is supported well under his arms, and his feet are placed lightly on a firm surface, he will place one foot in front of the other and "walk". Yes, your baby is truly amazing! Be sure to capture this one on video as the grandparents will love it!



THE FIRST MONTH

3. COLIC

What is it and what causes it? Despite knowing of its existence for thousands of years, we still don't have a clear understanding of colic. I tend to believe that it relates to your baby's temperament.

- Babies often have a fussy period each day when it seems that you can do nothing to comfort them. Often this occurs between 6pm and midnight - just when you are also tired and want to rest.
- These fussy periods tend to peak at about 3 hours per day at 6 weeks and decrease to 1-2 hours per day by three months. THIS IS NORMAL AMOUNTS OF CRYING.
- In some babies, these crying spells are excessive and prolonged, and in these cases we talk about colic. About 1 in 5 babies have these excessive crying periods, usually starting around 3 weeks causing these babies to cry inconsolably, draw up their knees and pass gas.
- But what can we do about it? Unfortunately there is no evidence that agents such as Gripe Water or Ovol have any benefit. Changing formulas, even to a soy formula has also not been shown to be consistently helpful.
- What is important to remember, is that colic is self-limited, and is very unlikely to be related to anything medically wrong. What you want to do is try and figure out what calms your baby and then do that. If a car ride settles the baby, then go and have another look at the sunset along the South Shore. And remember, it is OK to need a break, so make use of your spouse or family members or friends if the crying gets to be too much.
- Now, one special situation is that if your baby is fussy +++++ and also is a spitter, and the crying is throughout the day, then we are discovering a group of babies with reflux who probably have an element of esophagitis causing their discomfort. This we can help with medications, so please give the office a call.

4. THE FIRST SMILE

This is what initially makes it all worthwhile. Initially they will happen during sleep. You will have many special times when watching your baby sleep he will suddenly break into a big toothless grin. By the end of the first month, most babies have also started grinning back at you during their alert periods. These first smiles help you tune into each other even more closely. They are your baby's first true interactive conversations.

5. VISION

Whoever created babies did a great job! Babies were born with a focal point of 8-15 inches, the distance of a baby from your face when you hold him in your arms! His distance vision will improve as this month progresses. Your baby initially likes bold contrasting patterns and simple shapes, so black and white stripes, bulls eyes with spirals will attract his attention.

6. HEARING

All babies will receive a newborn hearing screen following birth, which is very accurate. I should have the results of this at your two week visit. Although hearing is fully mature at birth, don't expect your baby to turn to sounds or look at you when you call him from across the room. Initially babies may only quiet to sounds, although by a month of age they should also be startling to loud noises.

7. APPROPRIATE TOYS

Mobles with highly contrasting colours and patterns; unbreakable mirrors attached to the side of the crib; music boxes, soft, brightly coloured and patterned toys that make gentle sounds.



THE FIRST MONTH - BASIC CARE

1. FEEDING

Breast milk or formula (iron fortified) should be the basic source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life. Don't get rigid with timetables - instead take your cues from your baby. By watching and following your baby's cues, you will have a 'content little baby' - not by setting strict rules. Babies who are solely breastfed are recommended Vitamin D drops (these include either Trivisol or Polivisol).

Spitting up is normal. This happens because the muscle valve between the stomach and the esophagus is immature and often does not close tightly, allowing food to come back up. The milk can be liquid or it can be curdled, and it can even come out of the nose! This will get better with time alone, and does NOT represent an intolerance to the milk.

The AAP and CPS both recommend that babies receive breast milk for the first twelve months of life if possible.

2. GOING OUT

Fresh air and a change of environment is good for your baby and for you. Remember to dress the baby appropriately for the weather, and stay away from your nose with the green, runny nose. Also remember to protect your baby's skin from the sun.

3. TRAVELING

Make baby's first ride and every subsequent ride a safe ride. Remember all babies should be transported in an approved rear facing car seat. It is not only the smart thing to do, but the law as well.

4. HEALTH WATCH

NO BABY IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF LIFE SHOULD HAVE AN ELEVATED TEMPERATURE. The only way to check a newborn's temperature is rectally! Ear thermometers and forehead scanners are useless. If your baby has a fever equal or greater to 100.5 degrees F rectally, then I need to know about it immediately (regardless of the time of day). This is an appropriate time to make use of the pager.

5. GUNKY EYES

It is very common for a newborn to have a blocked tear duct or partially blocked tear duct. This will present as a yellow - green discharge from the corner of the eye. It can be treated by cleansing the eye with cooled boiled water, massaging the tear duct, and using an ointment for very resistant cases. It is often a nuisance and will be recurrent until the baby grows bigger hence the tear duct grows bigger.

6. CRADLE CAP (SEBORRHEIC DERMATITIS)

This appears as scaly patches on the scalp. It can also be present on the face, eyebrows, and behind the ears. It is treated by washing the hair and combing out the scales. Sometimes using baby or olive oil will help to massage up the crusts. Sometimes we will use a special shampoo or ointment for very difficult cases. Cradle cap's natural history is to get better with time.



7. BOWELS

Babies poop lots in the beginning. The poop is usually yellow, seedy and very loose (even like water). By one month of age though, the stools may have slowed to once every few days. This can be normal. Constipation is infrequent, hard stools. Soft stools that only happen every four days are normal (just think of the number of diapers you are saving!) As well, if the poop is soft, it is normal for babies to strain and grunt and go red in the face when they are having a stool. Imagine how red in the face you would go if you had to have a bowel movement lying down!

Your journey into parenthood has just begun. What an amazing time. You have already been amazed at how perfectly your baby is formed. Get ready to experience more amazement than you could ever imagine. BUT be ready to take the time so that you can discover all of the wondrous things that your child will show you. Investing time and love into your child is the most important investment you could ever make. The rewards and benefits from this investment are phenomenal and will last many lifetimes, as your children model your parenting to their children and so on and so on and so on.

So enjoy this journey with your new little one, as he or she looks to you and you alone for all of their needs, wants and desires.