

PE D I A T R I C S

of
Northeastern Pennsylvania

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YOUR SIX-WEEK-OLD

This is a tiring time for new parents. Pamper yourselves - rest whenever you can, housework can wait. Eat balanced meals and take an occasional "mental health" evening or afternoon away from baby. Remember, the more rested and relaxed you are - the better you can anticipate and meet your baby's needs - the more content your baby will be. Parents also need time together away from the baby.

Included in this handout is general "baby info." to help you along.

NUTRITION

Nutrition as this age should consist solely of breastmilk or formula. Water, juice, and solid food is not recommended at this age. "On Demand" feedings are advocated. This means your baby should be allowed to eat whenever she is hungry and as much as she wants. This usually works out to 3-4 ounces every 3-4 hours, but some babies will take more and some will take less. It is recommended, however, that you wake your baby at least every 3 hrs during the days for feedings. As long as weight gain is not a concern, you may let them sleep as long as they wish at night. Burp your baby frequently to decrease gas, and if your baby tends to spit up, try to hold her upright for at least 20 minutes after feeds. Routine vitamin supplementation is not recommended at this age, unless your baby is exclusively breastfed, in which case supplementation with Vitamin D is recommended.

SAFETY

Remember that all infants should be restrained in a rear facing car seat which is properly installed in the backseat of your vehicle. The Pennsylvania State Police can assist you and inspect your car to make sure your car seat is installed properly if you are unsure.

Baby should be placed on her back to sleep, and there should be no heavy blankets, stuffed animals or bumpers in the crib. Your baby should be placed in a crib or a bassinet at all times when sleeping and NEVER in bed with you, as the danger of suffocation from rolling over onto your child is high at this age.

Never leave your child unattended on a bed or a changing table, and never leave your child unattended in the car, even for short periods of time, as the temperature inside the car can elevate to dangerous, even fatal levels very quickly.

Also, NEVER leave a baby alone during bath time, even if using safety approved bath seat rings, etc., - not even for a few seconds to answer the phone or the door.

SKIN

If baby's cord and circumcision are healed - you're ready to bathe the baby in a tub. Use tepid (luke warm) water and a mild soap, (Unscented Dove or Johnson and Johnson Head to Toe),

to cleanse baby. You may clean the baby's scalp and hair with this soap also. You may also use a moisturizer on baby's skin at this age if it seems dry, but it should be unscented and hypoallergenic, such as Eucerin, Vaseline, Aquaphor or Aveeno Baby.

CRYING

Crying is normal. If baby is fed and dry, try extra cuddling. Avoid overtiring baby by beginning to establish a napping, or "quiet time" pattern.

SIBLINGS

If you have older children at home, you may be noticing some strange behavior called "sibling rivalry". Every child wants their parent's full attention. The trick for the parents is to assure all parties that there's enough love and attention for everyone. According to studies done, it seems jealous children feel that they are not liked and feel threatened. You must reassure your child of your love. Don't assume they know. Tell them and show them with lots of "TLC". All of your efforts in this process will pay off in a heightened sense of security and with less fighting. Carving out time to spend alone with your older child is very important as they tend to feel neglected and that all your attention is going to baby.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Refer to immunization chart in baby book for immunizations due.

Immunizations and their schedules change according to the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Check with your physician for changes/updates.

BABY'S DEVELOPMENT

Motor:

All arm, leg and hand movements are still reflexive
Unsupported head sags
On stomach, turns head and lifts it briefly
Rolls partway to side from back
Generally keeps hands fistled or slightly open; when open, will grasp a rattle, but drops it quickly
Stares at object, but does not reach for it

Language:

Cries, makes small, throaty sounds
Responds to voice

Mental:

Prefers patterns
Follows toys from side to center to body
Becomes excited when sees person or toy
Expects feedings at certain intervals
Quiets when held
Cries deliberately for assistance

Social

Responds positively to comfort and satisfaction; negatively to pain
May smile back at face or voice
Eyes fix on Mom's face in response to her smile
Makes eye to eye contact
Roots and suckles at breast
May recognize parent's voice
Daily patterns of sleep, crying, and eating are still irregular
Bowel movements are 3-4 times per day

- * An important reminder, these milestones are guidelines only. All babies do not develop at the same speed, nor do they spend the same amount of time at each stage of their development. Usually a baby is ahead in some areas, behind in others. The descriptions you found in this handout and will find in future handouts is for a "typical" child. The concept of the "typical" child describes the characteristics one would expect to find at a given age. If, however, you have concerns regarding your child's development, please discuss them with the Doctor.

Please call our office between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. That's what OUR part of YOUR team is all about!

Hang in there!

Your doing great!