Caring for Your Baby
2-4 Months

Helping Families Be Healthy from the Beginning
If breastfeeding, it is best to try to give your baby only breast milk for the first 6 months.

If formula feeding, always follow the directions and only mix the amount it says on the can. Do not add cereal to the bottle.

Learn your baby’s signs of hunger and fullness. Only feed when you see signs of hunger, and stop feeding when your baby shows signs of being full.

Learn ways to soothe your baby without feeding.

2-3 month olds need 14-17 hours of sleep a day. At 4 months, babies sleep 12-15 hours a day. This is an important time for healthy growth and brain development.
Sleep

Sleep is important!
Sleep is a time for brain development and healthy growth.

- Babies up to 3 months old should sleep 14-17 hours a day. That includes sleep at night and sleep during the day. Many babies at this age take 2-3 naps during the day and have a longer sleep time at night after a late-night feeding.

- At 4 months, babies sleep 12-15 hours a day, including 2-3 naps.

- Babies do not have regular sleep cycles until about 6 months of age.

Put your baby to bed sleepy, but awake.
This helps babies learn to fall asleep on their own without the extra comfort of rocking, holding or nursing.

Only put breast milk or formula in your baby’s bottle.
Putting cereal or other solid foods in the bottle is not healthy for a 2-4 month old and will NOT help her sleep at night.

- When your baby wakes up at night, it doesn’t always mean she is hungry. Try comforting your baby before feeding.

If you have concerns about your baby’s sleep, ask your baby’s doctor about it.
Feeding Your 2-4 Month Old

Good feeding habits now will help your baby start to learn healthy eating for life.

- **Hold your baby during feedings.**
  Meals are a time to be together, both now and as your baby gets older.

- **Feed in a quiet place with screens off.**
  This will help your baby focus on feeding.

- **If you are breastfeeding, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.**
  This can help your baby get used to the taste and be more likely to eat them as they get older.

- **Feed at signs of being hungry and stop feeding at signs of being full.**
  Feeding at other times can make it harder for your baby to know when she is hungry and full, which can lead to eating more than she needs to as she grows up.

Tips to feed your baby the right amount when using a bottle:

- **Do not make your baby finish what is in the bottle.**

- **Bottle size matters.** Bigger bottles make it more likely that your baby will take in more milk than he needs.

- **Check the nipple size by holding the bottle upside down.** Drops should fall one by one, not come out in a stream.

- **When feeding, hold your baby so his head is higher than the rest of his body.**

- **Hold the bottle straight out while feeding, not upside down.**

- **Feed slowly and take breaks every 30 seconds by tilting the bottle down.** This can help your baby learn to pace himself when eating.
Give your baby only breast milk or formula until they are at least 4 months old.

- It is not safe for babies to drink or eat anything else before 4-6 months. Cow’s milk is not safe or healthy for babies until they are one year old.
- When your baby is 4-6 months old, you will look for signs that she is ready and able to try foods. Let your baby show you when she is ready to start!
- At 4-6 months, your baby may be ready to try solid foods if she:
  - Can sit without help
  - Does not automatically push food out of her mouth
  - Can bring hands and toys to her mouth
  - Shows interest in food

Other important notes:

- A fussy baby is not always hungry. Babies also fuss when they are tired, cold, teething, and wet.
- If you do not see signs of hunger, try to calm your baby by singing, bouncing, or rocking before feeding. Pacifiers also help many babies calm down.

Remember...
Your baby knows when she is hungry and full. Follow her lead on when to feed.

Request Permission for Use
Play Time for Babies

Babies need to be active.
They can’t walk, but they do need to move!

Here are some ways your baby can move:

- Hold out a rattle or toy for your baby to reach for.
- Clap your baby’s hands together.
- Gently move your baby’s legs like they are riding a bicycle.
- Put your baby in different positions during the day. Avoid having him in a seat or rocker for long periods of time.
- Tummy Time! When your baby is awake and happy, put him on his stomach for a few minutes. This will help him get stronger as he learns to sit, crawl, stand, and walk. Do a few minutes of tummy time at different points in the day.
- Your baby love faces, and loves your face the most! Spend time playing, singing and looking at your baby. This is how your baby learns to read your emotions and tell what is safe, and it is how you learn to read your baby’s needs.

Tip: If you like the TV on as background noise, put on music or listen to the radio instead.
The Boston Basics are 5 fun, simple, and powerful ways that every family can give every child a great start in life.

**MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE STRESS**
Babies need to feel loved and safe. Manage your stress to help your baby feel secure.

**TALK, SING, AND POINT**
Newborns learn language! Point as you talk to give your baby clues to what you are saying.

**COUNT, GROUP, AND COMPARE**
Even babies start to learn math and thinking skills. Your baby will learn by watching you.

**EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT AND PLAY**
Babies learn by touching and exploring. Let your baby touch, bang and crawl to learn the way around.

**READ AND DISCUSS STORIES**
Reading is a great way to bond. Your baby will learn how books work and start to develop language.

The First 1,000 Days is partnering with the Boston Basics. Learn more about the Boston Basics at BostonBasics.org.
Your Baby’s Growth

Today’s Date: ____________

- Weight __________ pounds
- Length __________ inches

Weight for length percentile: ______

Feeding, soothing, and sleep goals:

Check out our short videos to learn more about caring for your baby.

Vidscrip.com/First1000Days

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