



AGE ONE MONTH TO THREE MONTHS

“HE SMILES” (AND IT WASN’T GAS!)

By the beginning of your baby’s second month, much of the awe, exhaustion and uncertainty that you felt immediately after his birth has given way to self-confidence. Schedules may be beginning during this period. And you will have probably received the crowning reward that makes all the sacrifice worthwhile - his first true smile! During this period your baby will undergo a dramatic transformation from a totally dependent newborn to an active and responsive infant.

He will lose many of his newborn reflexes and will acquire more voluntary control of his body. You will find him spending hours inspecting his hands and watching their movements; he will learn to recognize your face and voice (you’ll often get a smile when he sees or hears you); he will begin ‘talking’ to you in gentle but intentional coos and gurgles. With each of his new discoveries or achievements, you’ll see a new part of your child’s personality emerging.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & GROWTH

During this period your baby will continue to gain between 1 ½ - 2 pounds per month. He will grow in length by 1-1 ½ inches per month. Remember though, the actual numbers aren’t as important as whether he is following his curve on the growth charts. By four months of age (often much sooner) his posterior fontanel (soft spot) will be closed - the anterior fontanel will close between 9 months and 2 years.

MOVEMENT

Most of your baby’s newborn reflexes will begin to fade by the second or third month. You may still see the occasional fencing posture or startle reflex, but these will get less frequent. His movements are now becoming intentional. One of the first things you will notice is his increasing neck strength. Placing your baby on his tummy when he is awake is good for him and will help him strengthen these muscles, and also give him a new world vantage point. By two months he should be raising his head from the floor for short periods, and by four months his head lag should be mostly gone.

By four months, some babies can roll over, so remember SAFETY. Do not leave your baby unattended, even for a very short period, on a change table or a bed.

By four months, babies will also love to take weight on their legs, and will love to bounce on your lap. Their fists will also remain ‘open’ for long periods after 2-3 months. They will hold on to an object placed in their hand, and by four months will also swipe at dangling objects in front of them. As well, if they get a hold of an object, you can be certain that it will go into their mouth.

VISION

At one month, babies still see best when the object is within 12 inches from their eyes. As they get older their visual span will broaden. Babies love facial expressions, and will fascinate themselves for long periods while looking in the mirror. Unbreakable mirrors attached to a baby’s crib are therefore an excellent first development toy.

Tracking an object becomes a reality by 2 months of age. This will also allow him depth perception, and so as motor control improves by three or four months, he will be able to accurately reach an object. By three or four months his distance vision has also increased so that he can see you across a room. Colour vision is also improving at this time. Initially your baby is sensitive to the brightness or intensity of colour, and so bold contrasting patterns will attract his vision. Subtle shades of pastel colours will not be perceived by a newborn, but by four months he will be able to respond to the full range of colours.



HEARING & MAKING SOUNDS

Babies love the human voice - particularly their mothers, because this is associated with warmth, food and comfort. By listening to you and others talk to him, your baby will discover the importance of speech long before he understands or repeats any specific words himself. By one month, he will recognize your voice, even if he doesn't see you. By two months he will begin to coo and gurgle, and by four months he will babble routinely. He will also be able to recognize the tone of your voice, and respond appropriately.

Remember, all babies born in Bermuda get a hearing screen in their first week of life. I should have this result by your two week visit. By four months, your baby will usually be turning towards your voice or a rattle to localize where the sound is coming from.

EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

By the second month your baby will spend much of each day watching and listening to the people around him. Gradually he will learn that he can have 'conversations' with those around him. By responding quickly and enthusiastically to his smiles and engaging him often in these 'conversations', you will let him know that he is important to you, that he can trust you, and that he has a certain amount of control in his life.

During these early months, don't worry about spoiling him with too much attention. Observe your baby, and respond promptly when he needs you. You will be helping to establish his sense of security, and therefore laying a foundation for building confidence and trust. It is impossible to spend TOO MUCH time with your baby!!

FEEDING

Ideally your baby will continue on his diet of breast milk or iron-fortified formula from 1 to 4 months. On average, he will take about 5-6 ounces per feed by 4 months.

Even without changing your baby's diet during this period, you will probably see a change in his bowel movements. His intestines can now hold more and absorb a greater amount of nutrients, so the stools will usually tend to be firmer, and less frequent. Stools could even decrease in frequency to once every 4-6 days. Remember, if your baby is eating well, gaining weight, and the stools are not too hard or dry, this is normal.



HEALTH WATCH

UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION

Many babies will develop their first cold during these months, especially if there is another set of little hands at home. Breastfeeding will provide some immunity, but unfortunately it does not provide complete protection. Remember, **HAND WASHING**, is vitally important in preventing the spread of germs, as is covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough, and keeping little Johnny away when he has a dripping 'snotty' nose.

FEVER

Babies under 2 months of age **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to have a fever! If this should happen (temperature >100.5 degrees rectal) then we need to know **RIGHT AWAY**. **Remember we do not give Tylenol to a baby under 2 months of age!**

CRADLE CAP

In some babies, around 1 month of age, the scalp becomes red and scaly. You may also notice some redness in the creases of his neck, armpits and behind his ears. It can even spread to his face, chest and diaper area. If isolated to the scalp we call it cradle cap, if it is generalized we call it seborrheic dermatitis. Unfortunately we do not know the exact cause of this rash. It certainly is stimulated by the hormonal changes of pregnancy that stimulate oil glands. It is a nuisance rash, often clearing after use of baby oil or mineral oil, only to recur at a later date. The good news is that it is self-limited, and your baby's skin will be beautiful without scars in the not too distant future. We can talk about other creams to use at your regular visits.

ECZEMA

Atopic dermatitis often occurs in infants and children who have allergies or a family history of allergy or eczema, although the problem is not necessarily caused by an allergy. Eczema usually develops between two and six months of age with itching, redness, and the appearance of small bumps on the cheeks, forehead or scalp. The rash may spread to the arms or trunk. In half the cases the rash disappears by two or three years of age.

The most effective treatment is to prevent the skin from becoming dry and itchy. To do this use emollient (alpha keri oil) in the bath, use non-fragranced moisturizers frequently, and avoid woolen materials. You may also need a medicated ointment if the rash is severe which we can prescribe at one of your regular visits if necessary.



IMMUNIZATION ALERT

Your baby will receive his first set of shots at his two month visit and these will be repeated again at the four month visit. These shots will include:

1. Prevnar 13 - against pneumococcal meningitis
2. Pediacel - against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, hemophilus influenza b, meningitis
3. Rotarix - against rotavirus - the most common viral tummy infection in children.

Your baby will have a small chance of developing a fever or fussiness after these shots. When we see your baby, we will provide you with a fever guideline handout which includes his dose of Tylenol (after we weigh him) if he should develop a reaction.

For your information, the incidence of Hib meningitis has decreased by 99% since the introduction of the Hib vaccine. That is an amazing statistic. The shots are a small ouch, BUT they may save your baby's life.