

Let's **GROW** ...with your 4-6 month old | ISSUE THREE

Isn't it amazing... how your newborn has changed before your very eyes into a more active, social baby? By four months, your baby can show enjoyment, doubt, and frustration. He may smile at everyone but special smiles are still saved for his parents.

Around five months the new feelings of fear and excitement begin to appear. Also, your baby may have strong attachments to special people and objects.

Your six-month-old will want to be around other children. He enjoys playing "two-way" games like peek-a-boo. Play this game with your baby and watch him giggle with delight. Your baby will now play with toys for longer periods of time.

"Stranger anxiety" often appears as your baby realizes that you and he are separate people. He may show fear towards unfamiliar people and may now reach to be picked up when he needs a hug.

***Your baby enjoys being with you best.
You are his first and most important teacher.***

If I Had My Child to Raise All Over Again

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd finger paint more,
and point the finger less.
I'd do less correcting,
and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off the watch,
and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less,
and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious,
and seriously play.
I'd run through more fields,
and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging,
and less tugging.
I would criticize less,
and encourage much more.
I'd build self-esteem first,
and the house later.
I'd teach less about the love of power
and more about the power of love.

Adapted from Diane Loomans



Starting Solid Foods at Six Months

When your baby is six months old he will be ready for solid foods. Your baby doesn't need teeth to start eating solids. Starting solid foods too early or too late can cause problems. If you start solids too early, your baby may stop breastfeeding well, may not get all the benefits of breastmilk such as protection from illness, may have low iron levels, and may have a diet low in protein, fat, and other important nutrients. If you start your baby too late on solid foods, he may be slow to accept new textures, have a hard time chewing, and may not get all the vitamins and minerals he needs, such as iron and vitamin A.

Breastmilk is still the most important food for baby. However, extra iron is needed and solid foods provide a variety of nutrients, flavours, and textures for your baby.



How to tell if my baby is ready for solids?

Your baby is ready for solids when she:

- is six months old;
- holds her head up;
- sits up in a high chair;
- opens her mouth wide when you offer food on a spoon;
- turns her face away if she doesn't want the food;
- closes her lips over the spoon; and
- keeps food in her mouth and swallows it instead of pushing it out.

Make sure your baby shows all of these signs of readiness before you start solid foods.

- At first your baby may not accept new foods. If she closes her mouth or turns her head away, stop feeding her that food. Try it again another day. Keep feeding time pleasant. If your baby feels pressured to eat, she may not want to try other new foods.
- Each baby is different. Try not to compare your baby to other babies. Follow your baby's signs of readiness for food. Talk to your health care provider to help you decide if your baby is ready.

For more information about starting solid foods with your baby, please talk with your health care provider or contact your local health unit.

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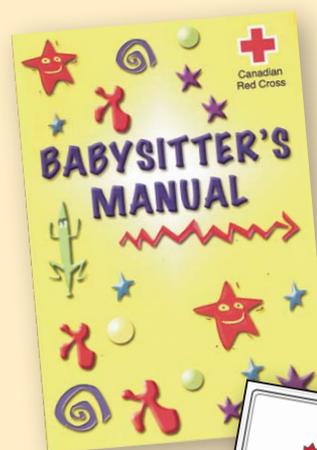
Babysitter Safety

As your baby grows, chances are that there will be times when you need a babysitter. For these times when you must rely on someone else to care for your baby, you need a solid plan in place.

If you have already paid someone to babysit your baby in the past, did you set out clear guidelines for them? Did you tell them about your child's likes, dislikes, and personality? If not, this is something you should do.

How do you go about choosing a babysitter?

- Get a trusted friend or family member if possible.
- Get recommendations from friends.
- Trade childcare with friends who have kids.
- Hire a sitter who is over the age of 12.
- Meet the sitter in advance, and check references.
- Make sure he or she knows CPR and first aid.
- Ask whether young sitters have taken an approved Babysitter's Course. If not, encourage them to take one. If you have a sitter aged 12 to 15 who you like, offer to pay for them to take the classes. Have them spend time with you and your kids, and see how they interact with the children. A good strategy is to hire them first as a "mother's or father's helper," and have them watch the kids while you are home getting something done.



Look What I Can Do!

From 4-6 Months, these are some of the things I can do:

4 Months

- I can hold my head steady when I'm in a sitting position
- I can follow objects with my eyes
- I might roll over
- I can grasp a rattle or small toy
- I like to look at my hands
- When I'm on my tummy, I can hold my head up and rest on my forearms
- I can look at small things such as Cheerios®
- I will reach for things
- I can sit with support
- I can turn my head towards sounds and your voice
- I should begin to imitate speech sounds
- I will move around to try to get a toy
- I seem to understand words such as "Daddy" and "bye-bye"
- I will start a conversation with you by babbling
- I may roll from my tummy to my back or my back to my tummy
- I will push up on my hands when I'm on my tummy
- I will use my hands to reach and grasp, bang, and splash



6 Months

- I will open my mouth for a spoon



Help Baby Grow

Your baby is becoming more social and aware of things and people around him. He is interested in toys that have a variety of textures, shapes, colours, and sounds. Look for toys that encourage him to grasp and reach. Many educational toys will be labelled with the appropriate age level.

Some toys and games might include:

- Play gyms
- Squeeze toys with well-embedded squeakers
- Plush toys (simple, washable, and soft)
- Sturdy books with simple pictures
- Toys or rattles that make noise
- Finger play games and rhymes like "Peek-a-boo" or "Pat-a-cake"
- Rocking and gently bouncing games to music and songs
- Feeling games so he can touch different textures such as rough and smooth, soft and hard
- Games on his tummy so he can begin to learn crawling motions

Safety Comes First!

Throw away broken toys. Closely check second-hand toys for loose or missing parts. Keep older children's toys with small parts out of baby's reach.

Watch for these Speech and Language Milestones

At 6 months of age my child:

- Makes several vowel sounds (e.g. ooh, aah, ee)
- Imitates some sounds (like coughing)
- Makes silly sounds with her mouth like "raspberries"
- Cries to an angry voice and smiles to a pleasant voice
- Enjoys games like "peek-a-boo" and tickling
- Turns toward you when you speak

If you did not check all of the boxes above, please call **tykeTALK** at 519-663-0273 or toll free at 1-877-818-8255 to find out more that you can do to help your child learn to talk.

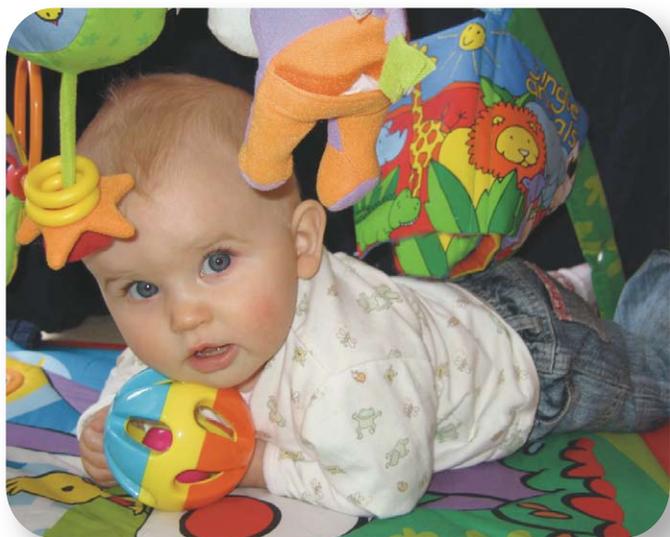


◀ Talk

Hickory Dickory Dock

Songs and rhymes are fun and bring you and your baby closer. They can also be a good distraction when your baby is fussy (like in the grocery store). Your baby needs to hear you say the words correctly though, not in baby talk.

Hickory dickory dock,
(Touch baby's toes, knees and hips)
The mouse ran up the clock.
(Walk' your fingers up his body)
The clock struck one,
(Touch baby's nose)
The mouse ran down,
(Walk' your fingers down his body)
Hickory dickory dock.
(Touch baby's toes, knees and hips again)



◀ Play

Remember that it's important for your baby to have time on his tummy. He likes it when you put him on his tummy and play with him. This will help him develop his tummy and neck muscles.

Kick Play

Your baby may also enjoy playtime while on his back. Put your baby on a safe, clean surface. All you need is a noisy toy such as a rattle or ball with bright colours on it. Dangle the toy near your baby's feet and let him try to kick it. If he is having a hard time, help him by moving his feet for him. Help your baby touch his toes. He will try and grab them and pull on them. If you have a play gym, help your baby try to kick the toys hanging on it.



◀ Teach

Bath Fun

Turn baby's bath time into fun time. Get a cup and pour water on your baby. Your baby will like toys that float in the bath. He may not try to grab the toys but you can draw attention to them by playing with them. Name the toys that are in the tub while you are playing with your baby. Name your baby's body parts as you wash them, but hang on tight - he can be slippery in the tub. Smile and make silly sounds at your baby. If you don't mind the mess, show him how to splash and have fun.

Babyproofing Basics

Most injuries involving babies and young children happen in or around the home. Children grow, learn, and develop new skills quickly. Injuries may happen when parents are not aware of what their child can do at each new stage of development. You should not wait until your child starts crawling to think about babyproofing. Chances are he will become mobile almost overnight and you will be caught unprepared.

Baby is seeing things from much closer to the ground than you are – so you need to get down on your hands and knees to check each room in your home.

Here are some of the most common household hazards:

Bathtub. Never leave your baby unattended in the tub, not even for a minute. She can drown in as little as an inch of water. To prevent scalding, set your water heater at 120°F (49°C) or lower, and never position your baby within reach of the faucet.

Cabinets. Move all potentially poisonous substances and sharp objects into locked cabinets. Better yet, purchase childproof safety latches for all the cabinets in your home - regardless of what they contain.

Cribs. As soon as your baby starts trying to pull himself up, move the crib mattress to its lowest position and remove all objects (including mobiles and toys) that he could climb up on to get out of the crib.

Electrical cords. Baby can chew on cords and wires or pull on them, bringing down lamps or other heavy objects on to his head. Move all cords well out of your child's reach.

Electrical outlets. Baby can get a shock by sticking her fingers (which may be wet from saliva) or objects into plug outlets. Close them off with safety plugs or with safety covers that snap shut when the outlet is not in use.

Flooring. Make sure area rugs are secured with non-skid backing and repair loose tiles, linoleum, and carpeting to prevent tripping.

Furniture. Unstable wall units, dressers, bookcases, televisions, or tables can topple over on a baby who tries to climb up on them. Have wobbly furniture repaired, or bolt questionable pieces to the wall.



Prevent Tooth Decay Early

It is always exciting when your baby gets her first tooth! But, have you heard about early childhood tooth decay? That's the formal name for rotten teeth. To keep this from happening to your child, don't let her fall asleep with food (or liquid) in her mouth. Sugary foods and fluids can rot baby's teeth because, as she sleeps, there is less saliva in her mouth to rinse the teeth.

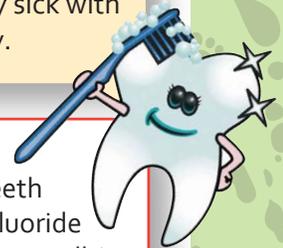
Even before baby has teeth, wipe her gums gently with a clean wet washcloth at least two times a day. As soon as baby has teeth, use a wet washcloth or a small soft toothbrush without toothpaste to gently clean her teeth. Good brushing habits will help baby have healthy teeth and gums. Lift your baby's upper lip monthly and check the front and back of her front teeth for chalky white or brown spots (signs of tooth decay).

To further prevent tooth decay, never share utensils with your baby or use your mouth to clean your baby's spoon or other items. Doing this exposes her to bacteria that could cause decay. ***Please don't give your baby honey*** – this could make your baby very sick with infant botulism and cause infant tooth decay.

All About Fluoride

Fluoride is a substance which makes baby's teeth harder and helps protect him from cavities. Fluoride is found in most tap water (municipal and private wells), fluoridated toothpaste, and commercial drinks and foods. Please don't give baby any fluoride supplements unless your dentist recommends it specifically for your baby.

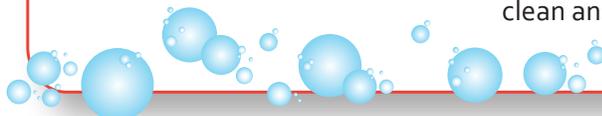
Too much fluoride will create white or brown spots on his teeth which will not come off. If you have questions about fluoride, call your local health unit for more information.



Clean and Healthy

If you are using infant feeding supplies, talk to your health care provider about how to clean or sterilize equipment. Keep in mind that toys, bowls, plates, cups and spoons need to be washed well with warm, soapy water.

Parents should remember to wash their hands frequently, before and after feeding and especially after changing baby's diaper. This will help keep everyone clean and healthy.





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