

PORTLAND PEDIATRIC GROUP, LLP

2 TO 6 MONTHS

By Dr. Chad Preston

Nutrition

Continue breast milk or formula. Most babies will begin to take bigger, less frequent feedings. Many are able to sleep through the night by the time they weigh 13 or 14 pounds.

The best time to begin solid foods will be between 4 and 6 months of age. Starting sooner may increase the risk of food allergies and obesity. Discuss the right time for your baby with your doctor at the 4 month checkup. This is a big topic, so also see our separate handout titled "Solid Foods."

Babies who are exclusively breastfed should continue a supplement containing 400 international units of vitamin D each day.

Almost all babies will have some reflux (spitting up). This may get worse before it gets better, and often peaks at about 4 months of age. If your baby is gaining weight and is not distressed by the reflux, the best treatment consists of simple prevention measures. Keep him as upright as possible during feeds and for 30 minutes after. Discuss any worsening symptoms with your doctor.

Elimination

Infant bowels work at different rates. If your child has a bowel movement only every 3 or 4 days but does not seem uncomfortable, that's OK. If stools are very hard or seem painful to pass, try any or all of the following: a warm bath to relax the abdominal muscles, rectal stimulation with a thermometer, or 2 ounces of prune juice per day (mixed 50/50 with water). As a last resort you can try an over-the-counter glycerin suppository. Please call us if you feel this is necessary or if there is any blood in the stool.

Sleep

Continue to place the baby on his back, alone, in a crib or bassinet. Please note that it's OK for a baby to sleep face down on your chest because you are watching them breathe.

You can reduce the risk of skull flattening by giving the baby a few minutes of “tummy time” each day and alternating which way her head faces when placed down. Try to put her down when she is drowsy but not yet asleep.

Safety

The car seat should be in the rear of the car, facing backwards.

Supervise your baby always! A baby that hasn't yet rolled over can still wiggle off a changing table onto the ground.

Do not rely on sunscreen to protect the skin of babies younger than 6 months—they should be out of direct sunlight and protected by hats, canopies, etc.

Illness

A fever is still urgent before 3 months of age. Call immediately for any rectal temperature above 100 degrees.

After 3 months, a fever is not urgent in a baby that is otherwise acting well (normal activity, appetite, and color, no rashes). However, because they are so young, babies from 3 to 6 months should be seen in the office. Give Tylenol if the temperature is above 101 degrees. (See our handout “Pain and Fever Medications in Infants” for a dosing chart.)

Decongestant and cough medicines should never be given to children younger than 4 years.

The first year of life will bring 6 to 8 colds on average, so expect your baby to spend a lot of time with a stuffy nose. Run a vaporizer at the bedside, and use a bulb aspirator to suck mucus out of the nose. If the mucus is very thick, you can use nasal saline drops to help break it down: Mix ½ teaspoon of table salt in 8 ounces of water. Gently tip the baby's head back, insert 3 or 4 drops of saline, wait 30 to 60 seconds, and then draw back with the bulb. Call if your child is not eating well, has decreased urine output, lethargy, or her breathing looks or sounds uncomfortable.

If your baby is younger than 6 months during the winter months, it is recommended that all household contacts get a flu shot to help prevent transmitting illness to the baby.

Remember that there is a doctor to see patients in the office in the morning every Saturday and most Sundays. If you have an urgent issue after hours that cannot wait until morning, call the doctor on call at 342-5665. Before calling, please use the American Academy of Pediatrics Symptom Checker as 90% of common questions are answered there. Go to <http://www.healthychildren.org>, click Tips & Tools, then Symptom Checker.

Much more information about infant care is available at our Web site:
<http://www.ppgkids.com>

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