

Guidance For The Parents Of The Two Month Old

Feeding

Your baby will continue to either breast-feed or formula feed. It is not recommended to begin solids until six months of age. Breast fed babies typically feed every 3-4 hours. Formula fed babies typically feed every 4 hours.

Continue to use an iron-fortified formula. If your baby seems to have difficulty with a formula, discuss this with your pediatrician prior to switching brands/types of formula. The amount of formula that is given at a feeding is roughly: (the age in months + 3). Unless instructed by your pediatrician, do not put cereal in your baby's bottle. Contrary to popular belief, mixing cereal in the bottle with the formula will not make your baby sleep longer at night.

Make sure you feed your baby in a semi-upright position. Bottle propping is dangerous since your baby is not able to control the flow of formula. Never put your baby to bed with a bottle as this practice increases the risk of dental caries.

Never warm bottles of breast milk or formula in a microwave oven. This practice can create hot pockets of fluid in the bottle, which will burn your baby.

Bowel Movements

Over time babies' bowel habits may change. Some babies will continue to have several bowel movements per day while others stool only once every 5-6 days. Both situations are normal. If your baby's stools contain hard balls or pellets or there is blood on the surface of the stool, make an appointment to discuss constipation.

Sleep

Continue to place your baby on his back to sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), in your room up to 6-12 months of age. It is important that your baby have some time on his belly when he is awake to allow him to gain upper body strength and prevent his head from flattening in the back. To be safe, the slats on your crib should be less than or equal to 2 7/8 inches apart. Do not use soft bedding such as quilts, pillows, and blankets, and do not place stuffed toys in the crib as they may increase the risk of suffocation.

Most two-month-old babies still require several naps during the day and typically are not awake for more than two hours at a time. By two months of age, some babies are sleeping through the night, but many still require a middle of the night feed. Establish a bedtime routine (bath, read, music, etc). To encourage sleeping through the night, try waking your baby for a last feed at 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. every night. Try not to stimulate your baby too much for this last feed; keep the lights dim, feed him in his room, burp him, change his diaper and return him to his crib.

Sleep (cont'd)

If you're looking for more guidance with sleep, we recommend "Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child", by Mark Weissbluth. Another option is "On Becoming Babywise", by Izzo.

Prevention of Illness and Fever

Signs of illness to watch for include failure to eat, vomiting, unusual irritability, lethargy, and fever. You should have a digital thermometer (the tympanic, or ear, thermometers do not work with infants). If your baby shows any of the above symptoms take a rectal temperature. A temperature of 100.4 or greater is a **fever**. If your baby has a fever, call the office for an appointment.

Safety

There are several measures you should take to prevent injury to your baby. Until your baby is two years of age OR weighs less than 30lbs, they require a rear facing car seat and in the back seat when riding in a car. Never place a baby in a front seat with a passenger airbag. To prevent burns turn the thermostat on your **water heater down to 120 degrees** Fahrenheit. Keep hot liquids (coffee, soup) away from your baby. Install in your home and check on a regular basis both **smoke and carbon monoxide detectors**. For your baby's sake, keep your home and car free of tobacco smoke. Use a brimmed hat, sunglasses and umbrella to provide shade for baby. If exposure to sunlight is unavoidable, use a sunscreen. **Never shake your baby** – this can cause permanent neurological damage. Never leave your baby alone with young siblings or pets. Never leave your baby alone in a tub or high places. When on the changing table, always keep a hand on your baby as she may startle and flip or slip off the table. Keep small objects and plastic bags out of your baby's reach as they pose choking hazards to your baby. Baby **walkers** are dangerous. Babies sustain broken bones and severe brain injuries by falling down steps or flipping over door jams. If you have purchased or were given a baby walker as a gift, exchange it for a stationary walker which has no wheels (such as an Exersaucer®). Stationary walkers are safe for babies beginning at 4-5 months or age.

For more information about child health, safety and parenting visit the American Academy of Pediatrics' web site @ WWW.AAP.ORG