



**YOUR
NEW
BABY**

NEW BORN

Congratulations on your new baby!

This pamphlet offers tips to help keep you and your newborn safe and healthy.

For more information and support, talk to your doctor, call 311, or visit nyc.gov and search for *health*.

Best wishes,



Thomas Farley, MD MPH
Commissioner, New York City Health Department

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ENJOY YOUR BABY

Your love and attention are the most important things in your baby's life — as important as food and a place to live. When you cuddle your baby, she feels happy. When you comfort her, she feels safe.

Anytime can be quality time — feedings, diaper changes, bath time or travel time. Have fun with your baby. Play peek-a-boo, sing songs, giggle together. Nothing you can do or buy for your baby is as important as your relationship with her.

Take Care of Yourself. This is an important time for you and your baby. Take care to eat well and get enough sleep. Ask for help if you need it. Healthy parents mean healthy babies.

Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

Your baby is learning how to focus, listen and understand, even when he is just an infant.

Hold your baby. Your baby remembers the beat of your heart. When you rock your baby, he feels secure. When you hold him, he feels loved. Sometimes all it takes is a touch or a smile to show him that you care.

Talk to your baby. Sounds are the foundation for speech and language. When your baby makes sounds, answer her — even before she knows what the words mean. Reading, singing and telling stories help your baby connect with you and feel the love and affection she needs to grow and develop. But limit TV because it's not a substitute for your voice.

Is Your Baby Developing Normally?

The first year brings rapid change and development in your baby's life. Babies learn and develop at different rates, but new skills should occur during expected time frames. If you are worried about your child's development — for example, he isn't smiling, making eye contact, rolling over like other babies or doesn't seem to hear or recognize you — speak with your baby's doctor.

How to Comfort Your Crying Baby

Crying is the only way your baby can tell you that she's sleepy, hungry, too warm or too cold, or needs a fresh diaper.

- Try a diaper change or a feeding.
- Turn down the lights and turn off the TV.
- Speak or sing to your baby softly, or play comforting music.
- Gently rock your baby. Or walk around holding your baby close.
- Take your baby for a walk in the stroller.



Healthy Parenting

You've tried everything — feeding, cuddling, a new diaper. Still your baby won't stop crying.

- Take a step back. Put your baby in the crib and walk into another room. Check back every few minutes to make sure she is safe.
- Take five deep breaths. Inhale and exhale s-l-o-w-l-y.
- Call a trusted friend, relative or neighbor for help. Ask someone to come over and keep you company. It's okay to ask for support.
- Ask someone you trust to watch your baby. Then exercise or go for a walk, or do something else that makes you feel better.
- Join a support group for new parents.

Never Shake Your Baby

No matter how tired, angry or frustrated you feel, *never shake or handle your baby roughly*. Shaking can cause permanent brain damage or even kill a baby. It takes only a few seconds of shaking to hurt a baby's developing brain.

HELP IN A CRISIS, DAY OR NIGHT

- Call your baby's doctor. Someone is always on call.
- If you feel you can't cope and need to talk to someone right away, call 311 or the New York Foundling Crisis Nursery and 24-Hour Helpline for crisis counseling and emergency child care at 888-435-7553.
- The Abandoned Infant Protection Act allows parents to leave a newborn they can't care for in a safe place with an appropriate person. Safe places include hospitals and police and fire stations. Call 866-505-SAFE (800-505-7233) for information. You don't have to give your name.



BREASTFEEDING — SIMPLY THE BEST

Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. It's always ready (no bottles to clean!) and it's *the only food your baby needs* for the first six months.

Breastfeeding prevents allergies, protects against infections and helps you and your baby feel close. Breast-fed babies have less vomiting and diarrhea. And they're less likely to get asthma or diabetes, or to become obese.

Breastfeeding is good for mothers, too. It helps your uterus return to normal size and lessens bleeding after delivery. Breastfeeding also lowers risks for breast and ovarian cancers and may help you lose weight more quickly.

Breastfeed often at first — new babies need to feed every two or three hours. You can introduce solid foods at six months, but your baby should continue to drink breast milk or formula (not cow's milk) through the first year.

Any amount of breastfeeding is good for you and your baby. But *exclusive* breastfeeding (breast milk only) for six months makes your baby healthier. Breastfeed as long as you and your baby want — six months, 18 months — the longer the better.

Getting the Help You Need

Almost every woman can breastfeed, but it helps to have support. Talk to your doctor if you have questions or problems. A lactation consultant, another nursing mother or a mother's group also can help. **Call 311** for information.

Breastfeeding women have rights. In New York State, you have a legal right to pump breast milk at work. Ask your workplace about authorized breaks and a private space for pumping.

New York City law gives women the right to breastfeed in any public area.

HAVE A REGULAR DOCTOR

Having a regular doctor helps keep you and your family healthy. **Call 311** for help to get one.

Within three to five days after leaving the hospital, your baby will start "well baby" visits to make sure she is growing and developing well, to see how breastfeeding is going and to get important vaccinations (baby shots). Expect at least six of these visits the first year.

All children born in New York City are enrolled in the Citywide Immunization Registry, which keeps a record of vaccines your child receives. For a copy of your child's immunization record, **call 311**.

Breast milk may not provide enough vitamin D, so talk to your baby's doctor about a prescription. All infants need vitamin D drops for a few months.

Free or Low-Cost Health Insurance

Many families qualify for free or low-cost insurance through Medicaid, Child Health Plus or Family Health Plus. For information and help to enroll, **call 311** or visit nyc.gov and search for *healthstat*.



KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

It's Best for Baby to Sleep Alone

Sleeping with your baby can be dangerous. An adult or child can easily roll over and hurt or even suffocate a baby.

Protect your baby against suffocation and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Put your baby to sleep alone, on her back, on a firm mattress, without pillows, stuffed toys or blankets near her face.

Don't Let Anyone Smoke Around Your Baby

Babies with a parent who smokes are more likely to die from SIDS. And babies who live with second-hand smoke are much more likely to have asthma, bronchitis, ear infections and pneumonia.

Make your home smoke-free. **Call 311** to find out how, or for free help to quit smoking.

Keep Your Baby Away From Poisons

Store all medicines and hazardous products (cleaning products, pesticides or other chemicals) where your baby can't reach them.

Prevent Lead Poisoning

Lead can harm your baby's health, learning and behavior. Make sure your doctor tests your baby for lead poisoning at ages one and two (it's the law) and sooner if there are any special risks in your home or family. Older children should be tested, too, if they may have had contact with lead.

- Keep your baby away from peeling paint and renovation work.
- Wash floors and window sills every few days.
- Make sure your baby's hands, toys and pacifiers are always clean.
- Use cold (not hot) tap water for drinking and cooking, and for mixing baby formula.
- Report peeling or damaged paint to your landlord. Your landlord must safely fix peeling paint. If this does not happen, **call 311** for help.

Window Guards Prevent Falls

Properly installed window guards protect children from death and serious injuries.

By law, owners of apartment buildings with three or more units must supply, install and maintain window guards in apartments where children 10 years of age or younger live. If you don't have window guards, ask your landlord to install them.

BE THE BEST PARENT YOU CAN BE

To take good care of your baby, you have to take good care of **yourself**.

Every Parent Needs Support. Being a parent can be the hardest job you'll ever have, but you don't need to do it alone. Find healthy ways to relax. Spend time with people who love and support you. When you are happy, your baby is happy, too.

Depression, Alcohol and Drugs Affect Your Whole Family

Many new mothers experience changes in mood and cry more often after their babies are born. These problems are common and usually last a couple of weeks. But if you're crying a lot or feel sad, guilty, hopeless or overwhelmed much of the time, talk to your doctor. You may have postpartum depression — and depression can be treated. Untreated depression can make it harder for you to give the best possible care.

Worried about your drinking or drug use?

To be the healthiest parent you can be, get help now. *Recovery is possible.*

For help with depression, alcohol or drug problems, talk to your doctor or **call 311 for LifeNet**, or call direct: **800-LIFENET (800-543-3638)**.

A Home Without Violence

A home that's free of violence and abuse helps children flourish and become strong, healthy adults. Domestic violence is a crime, and no one should have to live with it.

Call 311 for the Domestic Violence Hotline or call direct: **800-621-HOPE (800-621-4673)**.

Someone will help you, even if you're undocumented.

Always call 911 in an emergency.

PLANNING PREGNANCY

Every woman has the right to decide if and when to become pregnant. Planning pregnancy prevents many problems and helps your baby get the best possible start. Make sure you are healthy before you get pregnant again. Ideally, there should be at least 18 months between pregnancies to give your body a chance to recover.

Talk to your doctor or visit a family-planning clinic to choose the birth control method that's right for you. Use condoms to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections — no matter what kind of birth control you use.

Emergency contraception (Plan B, for example) can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. The sooner you take it, the better.

Emergency contraception works best when taken within three days (72 hours) after unprotected sex. It is moderately effective when taken within five days after sex.

Call 311 to find out where to get free or low-cost family planning and emergency contraception services.





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