



**YOUR  
NEW  
BABY**

# NEW BORN

Congratulations on your new baby!

This booklet 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/health](http://nyc.gov/health).

Best wishes,



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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 *you*.

## Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

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

**Talk to your baby.** Read, sing and tell stories. When your baby makes sounds, answer him by repeating and adding words — even before he knows what all the words mean. Sounds are the foundation for speech and language.

**Limit TV,** especially for children under 2. The TV can't respond to your baby's smiles, noises or touches. Whether you talk, sing or read, it's the sound of *your* voice — not just any voice — that will help your baby connect with you, and feel the love and affection she needs to grow and develop.

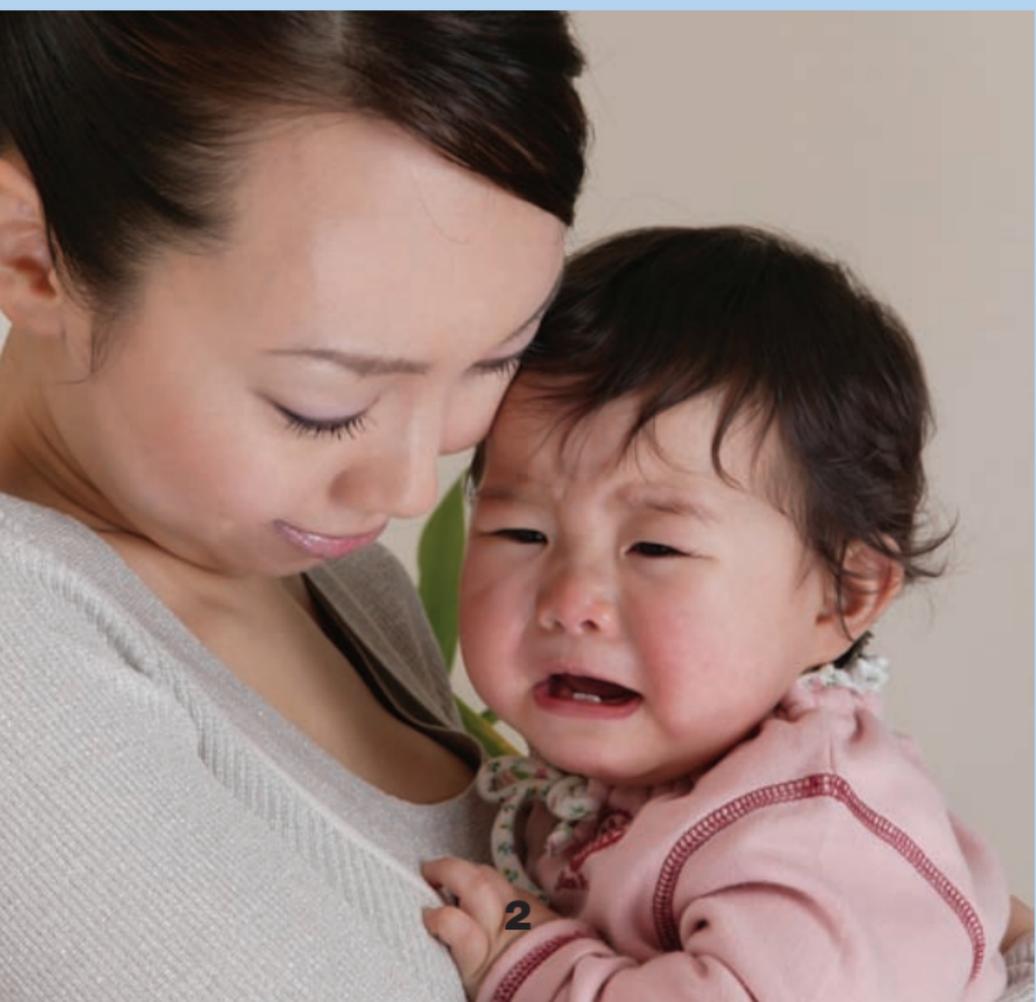
## Is Your Baby Developing Normally?

Babies and toddlers learn and develop at different rates, but there are expected time frames to gain most new skills. If you are worried about your child's development — for example, she isn't rolling over like other babies or doesn't seem to hear you 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.
- Ask someone you trust to watch your baby. Then exercise or go for a walk.

## 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

- If you feel you can't cope and need to talk to someone right away: Call 311 for the Parent Hotline, or call direct: 1-800-342-7472.  
Online help: [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)
- If you can't care for your baby:
  - Call the Family Crisis Center and Crisis Nursery for help and emergency child care: 1-888-435-7553.
  - The Abandoned Infant Protection Act allows parents and other legally responsible persons 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 1-866-505-SAFE (1-800-505-7233) for information. You don't have to give your name.



# BREAST-FEEDING IS BEST

Breast milk is the best food for your baby. It is always ready (no bottles to clean!). Try to breast-feed for at least 4 to 6 months. Breast-feeding prevents allergies, protects against infection and helps you and your baby feel especially close.

Breast-feeding is good for mothers, too! It will help you return to your pre-pregnancy weight (it burns about 500 calories a day). And it lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Your baby will probably want to eat every 2 or 3 hours for the first few weeks. By the fourth or fifth week, your baby will probably have a more regular, less frequent, feeding pattern. All babies should drink either breast milk or infant formula (not cow's milk) for a full year. Solid foods can be introduced at 4 to 6 months, but your baby should continue nursing or drinking formula for the first year.

More and more companies offer lactation programs, with authorized breaks and private rooms for pumping. Ask if your workplace has one.

## Healthy Weight

Breast-feeding helps protect your child from putting on extra weight. If you use formula, don't allow your baby to use the bottle as a pacifier or sleep with the bottle, and don't add cereal to formula.

- Offer breast milk or formula only when your baby seems hungry. Babies cry for many reasons. Try cuddling and a fresh diaper before offering a feeding.
- Talk to your health care provider about when to start solid foods and which foods are best for your baby.

# HAVE A REGULAR DOCTOR

Your baby will need at least five “well baby” visits during her first year to make sure she is growing and developing well, starting at 2 weeks (or within the first week if you are breast-feeding). She will also receive important vaccinations (baby shots).

Having a regular doctor helps keep your family healthy. **If you don't have a regular doctor, call 311 for help to get one.**

## 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/healthstart](http://nyc.gov/healthstart).**



# 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. For free help to quit smoking, **call 311 for the Smokers' Quitline.**

## Keep Your Baby Away From Poisons

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

## Protect Against 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 apartments with three or more apartments 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**.*

## Help for Depression, Alcohol and Drug Problems

Most new mothers experience mood swings. Many also have appetite changes and trouble sleeping. These problems are common and usually go away in a few weeks. But if you feel guilty, hopeless or overwhelmed much of the time, talk to your doctor. You may be experiencing depression — and depression can be treated.

Worried about your drinking? To be the best and healthiest parent you can be, get help now for alcohol and drug problems. Recovery is possible!

For help with depression, alcohol or drug problems, talk to your doctor or **call 311** for LifeNet, or call direct: **1-800-LifeNet** (1-800-543-3638).

## A Home Without Violence

A home that's free of violence and abuse provides a foundation for children to 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: **1-800-621-HOPE** (1-800-621-4673). Someone will help you, even if you're poor or 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 ensure that your baby gets the best possible start. Make sure you're as healthy as possible *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 protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, no matter what kind of birth control you use.

Emergency contraception (Plan B) can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. The sooner you take it, the better. Plan B works best when taken within 3 days (72 hours) after unprotected sex. It is moderately effective when taken within 5 days (120 hours) after sex.

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



