Healthy Beginnings for Babies

Love, hugs, and regular check-ups

Guide for Baby’s 1st Year
Congratulations!

You have a new baby – what a great joy!

We want to help you give your baby a great beginning in life – a healthy beginning. Having a new baby in the family is an exciting time, but it can also be a lot to handle! With so much to know, we want to help make one part of your life a bit easier – the visits to your baby’s doctor. One of the most important ways to help give your baby a healthy start is to take your baby to every well-baby check-up.

**Healthy Beginnings for Babies** - a program that provides information to help you give your baby a great start – is providing this guide to parents. It helps explain why each of your baby’s check-ups is important and tells you some things to expect at each visit. We hope you find it helpful and bring it with you to your baby’s checkups.

**Healthy Beginnings for Babies** is funded by Merck in partnership with the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition and the National Medical Association.

Wishing you and your baby a healthy beginning,

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Chief Executive Officer  
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

Dr. Myrtis Sullivan  
Pediatric Specialist  
National Medical Association

Dr. Julie Gerberding  
President – Merck Vaccines  
Merck
Welcome
Introduction
First Few Weeks
Month 1
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Chart
This guide was developed by Healthy Beginnings for Babies, a program that provides you with information to help you give your baby a healthy start.
Introduction

This easy-to-use guide is for parents with babies under 1 year old to help them prepare for their babies’ visits with the doctor. Your baby needs these check-ups for many reasons, like getting important shots. Usually, well-baby check-ups are scheduled within the first two weeks after the baby is born and then again during months 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12. But no two babies are alike, so ask the doctor how often your baby needs a check-up.

About Shots – Shots (vaccines) help keep your baby from getting serious illnesses. There are a number of shots that are given during a baby’s first year and some are given in more than one dose over several months. Your doctor will tell you which shots your baby needs at each visit. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.

You can keep track of your baby’s doctor’s visits, shots, height, weight, and head size by filling in the chart in the back of this guide.

This guide does not provide any medical advice. Your doctor is the best person to give you medical information about your baby.
First Few Weeks
After your baby is born through 3 weeks

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

During the visit, ask the doctor when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

At this visit, the doctor may talk about:

- How things are with your baby and if you have any questions about feeding or breastfeeding
- Since your baby is too young for some shots, you and other caregivers may be asked to get certain shots to help protect you and your baby from getting sick
- A 6-week check-up for baby’s mom to make sure her body is getting back to normal and she is feeling good

Your doctor will do a physical exam of your baby, including:

- Taking measurements like weight, height, and head size
- Checking your baby’s skin, head, eyes, muscles, bones, and body movements
- Listening to your baby’s heart
- Checking the umbilical cord to make sure it is healing

Tip: Talk to your doctor about the recommended shots your baby will need to help prevent serious diseases.
Remember:
You can keep track of your baby’s measurements and shots by filling in the chart in the back of this guide.

If you delivered your baby in a hospital, your baby may have received “screening” tests such as hearing and vision. If you haven’t gotten the results, ask your doctor for them. Your doctor may want to test again or let you know that another test may be needed in the future. If your baby didn’t have the tests listed below, ask your doctor to do them.

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are some questions you may want to ask:

- How can I tell if my baby is running a fever? How do I take his or her temperature?
- What do I do in case of an emergency with my baby?
- How much should I have my baby around other people?
- How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?

Tip: Ask all family and friends to wash their hands before holding your baby. If someone is sick, you should not let them touch your baby.

Tip: The safest way for most babies to sleep is alone on his or her back in a crib. Never put your baby to sleep on a sofa or pillow. Be sure to tell this to everyone who takes care of your baby.
My Questions and Notes

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Month 1

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

During the visit, ask the doctor when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

At this visit, the doctor may talk about:

- How you are managing with a newborn
- Tips on keeping your baby safe in the car or on the bus or subway
- Since your baby is too young for some shots, you and other caregivers may be asked to get certain shots to help protect you and your baby from getting sick
- A 6-week check-up for baby’s mom to make sure her body is getting back to normal and she is feeling good

Just like your baby’s first check-up, your doctor will do a physical exam of your baby, including:

- Taking measurements, like weight, height, and head size
- Checking your baby’s skin, head, eyes, tummy, muscles, bones, and body movements
- Listening to your baby’s heart
- Checking the umbilical cord to make sure it is healing

If you delivered in a hospital, your baby may have received screening tests. If you haven’t gotten the results, ask your doctor for them. Your doctor may want to test again or let you know if another test may be needed in the future. If your baby didn’t have the tests listed below, ask your doctor to do them:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Tuberculosis
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are some questions you may want to ask:

- What do I do in case of an emergency?
- What should I do if my baby feels warm or might have a fever?
- Can I give my baby medicine, if needed?
- What can I do if my baby won’t stop crying?
- How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?
- How many wet and dirty diapers should my baby have each day?

Remember: Shots can help keep your baby from getting some serious illnesses. During this visit your baby may receive one or more shots. You can keep track of these shots by filling in the chart in the back of this guide.

My Questions and Notes

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Month 2

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

During the visit, ask the doctor when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

By now, you have probably been to at least a couple of well-baby visits. At the beginning of the appointment, your doctor may start by talking about:

• How you and your family are doing with the baby
• Differences in your baby’s cries: hungry, tired, or uncomfortable/not feeling well
• Things your baby might be doing, such as:
  • Looking at or focusing on you
  • Knowing your voice
  • Smiling
  • Holding up his or her head or moving head, arms, and legs
• Since your baby is too young for some shots, you and other caregivers may be asked to get certain shots to help protect you and your baby from getting sick
• Have you gone back to work? Or will you be going back to work? If so, and you are breastfeeding, is there a private place at work where you can pump and safely store your milk?

Tip: You can keep track of your baby’s shots by filling in the chart in the back of this guide. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.
Just like your baby’s one-month check-up, your doctor will do a physical exam of your baby, including:

- Taking measurements like weight, height, and head size. Ask your doctor how much your baby has grown since the last visit. You can keep track of these measurements with the chart in the back of this guide.
- Checking your baby’s skin, head, eyes, muscles, bones, and body movements
- Listening to your baby’s heart

During this check-up, your doctor may also give these tests:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Tuberculosis
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are a few questions you might want to ask:
- Who should I call if I think my baby needs medicine?
- What can I do if my baby won’t stop crying?
- How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?
- How many wet and dirty diapers should my baby have each day?
- When should my baby start sleeping through the night?
- How much tummy time should my baby have each day?

Tip: Put your baby in a car-safety seat for every trip in a car, truck, or van. Your baby should ride in a rear-facing car seat until age 2.
My Questions and Notes
Tip: When giving your baby a bath, never leave your baby alone. Keep your baby safe by always staying within arm’s reach of the baby.
Things to Note or Remember

Remember, all check-ups are very important to help your baby have a healthy beginning, so make sure you schedule and keep all appointments.

Below are some things you can do before your next visit:

- Use your chart to help keep track of your baby’s shots. You can ask your doctor if your baby is on schedule for the recommended shots.
- This month, your baby may be:
  - Responding to familiar voices
  - Spending more time awake during the day and/or sleeping longer hours at night
  - Drinking more ounces of milk (breast milk or formula) to feel full
  - Smiling at you
  - Making cooing sounds or starting to babble more often
  - Gripping your finger

My Questions and Notes

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Month 4

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

Remember to ask during the appointment when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next well-baby check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

You’ve been to at least a few well-baby visits and now you know what topics may be covered at each visit. The doctor may ask:

- If you’re going back to work, who will be taking care of your baby?
- How is your baby doing: sleep, playtime, and interaction with others?

Just like your last well-baby check-up, below are some things your doctor may do during the physical exam:

- Take measurements like weight, height, and head size. Ask your doctor how much your baby has grown since the last visit.
- Check your baby’s skin, head, eyes, muscles, bones, and body movements
- Listen to your baby’s heart

At this time, your baby may not need more tests. However, the doctor may choose to check:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Anemia (low iron in blood)

**Remember:** Shots can help prevent your baby from getting some serious illnesses. During this visit, your baby may receive one or more shots.
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are a few questions you might want to ask:
- When should I give my baby more than milk (breast milk or formula) to drink or eat, such as cereal or soft foods?
- When will my baby start teething?
- When will my baby start to sleep through the night?
- How much tummy time should my baby have each day?

Tip: Each baby develops at his or her own pace. However, it’s important to talk to your baby’s doctor if you have any concerns about how your baby learns, speaks, acts, or plays.

My Questions and Notes

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Baby’s Health Guide: Month 4
Tip: Check with your baby’s doctor before giving medicine to your baby. If the doctor prescribes medicine, be sure to follow the doctor’s instructions.
Things to Note or Remember

Remember, all check-ups are very important to help your baby have a healthy beginning, so make sure you schedule and keep all appointments.

Below are some things you can do before your next visit:
• Look at the chart you are using to help keep track of your baby’s shots. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.
• This month, your baby may be:
  • Holding head steady when sitting up
  • Pushing up on arms when lying on tummy
  • Focusing on small objects

My Questions and Notes

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Baby’s Health Guide: Month 5
Month 6

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

Remember to ask during the appointment when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next well-baby check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

By now, you’ve been to several well-baby check-ups and know what topics may be covered at each visit. Your doctor may still start by asking a few questions, such as:

- If you have gone back to work, how have you and the baby been doing?
- If your baby is starting to crawl, do you have any concerns about movement or safety?

Below are some things your doctor may do during the physical exam for your baby’s 6-month check-up, just like your other well-baby check-ups:

- Take measurements like weight, height, and head size. The doctor or nurse will chart this information and should tell you how much your baby has grown since the last visit.
- Check your baby’s skin, head, eyes, muscles, mouth, bones, and body movements
- Listen to your baby’s heart

If needed, these other tests may be done:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Lead
- Tuberculosis

**Remember:** Shots can help keep your baby from getting some serious illnesses. During this visit, your baby may receive one or more shots.
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are a few questions you might want to ask:
- My baby is teething. What would help with the pain?
- My baby has a few teeth and is starting to reach for table food. Can I start to give some soft foods?
- When should I begin to take my baby to the dentist?

Tip: Each day, brush your baby’s teeth with a toothbrush and water. If your doctor tells you to, use a tiny bit of toothpaste.

My Questions and Notes

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Month 7

**Tip:** Don’t forget to lock up medicines and cleaning products. Keep the toll-free Poison Action Line number in your phone.
Things to Note or Remember

Remember, all check-ups are very important to help your baby have a healthy beginning, so make sure you schedule and keep all appointments.

Below are some things you can do until your baby’s next regularly scheduled check-up:

- Look at the chart you are using to keep track of your baby’s shots. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.
- Note if your baby may be:
  - Eating crackers or snacks on his or her own
  - Babbling more often
  - Sitting or starting to sit without any support
  - Trying to grab objects to touch or hold

My Questions and Notes

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Tip: Keep small toys and other small items out of baby’s reach. Even things in your purse or bag, like coins or candy, are choking dangers for baby.
Things to Note or Remember

Your baby is getting older and doing more on his or her own! This month, you may not have a regularly scheduled well-baby check-up. But always call the doctor if you notice that your baby is not feeling well, responding differently, or something else has you concerned.

Below are some things you can do until your baby’s next regularly scheduled check-up:

• Look at the chart you are using to keep track of your baby’s shots. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.

• This month, your baby may be:
  • Trying to stand or put weight on legs when being held upright
  • Picking up objects and passing them from one hand to another
  • Understanding simple commands like, “No.”

My Questions and Notes

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Month 9

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

Remember to ask your doctor during the appointment when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next well-baby check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

Your baby is getting close to a year old and you have had many well-baby check-ups. At this check-up, the doctor may not ask for details about what your baby is doing, but will want to get an overall idea of how everyone is doing and see if you have any concerns.

Tip: You can keep track of your baby’s shots by filling in the chart in the back of this guide. Ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby’s shots.
Like your other well-baby check-ups, below are some things the doctor may do during the physical exam:

- Take measurements like weight, height, and head size. The doctor or nurse will chart this information and should tell you how much your baby has grown since the last visit.
- Check your baby’s head, eyes, muscles, mouth, bones, and body movements
- Listen to your baby’s heart

If needed, these other tests may be done:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Lead
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are a few questions you might want to ask:

- What types of foods are best for my baby to eat now?
- How do I continue to breastfeed if I’m giving solid foods to my baby?
- I want to continue breastfeeding, but my baby is starting to drink from a sippy cup. Is this okay?
- Should my baby be sleeping through the night?

Tip: Keep your home and car smoke-free!
Even with windows open or fans on, your baby still breathes tobacco smoke.
My Questions and Notes
Tip: Running a quick errand? Never leave your baby alone in the car. Babies and kids can overheat in just a few minutes.
Things to Note or Remember

Your baby is 10 months old! This is a fun time as you can start to see your baby’s personality.

Below are some things you can do until your next visit:
• Use your chart to help keep track of your baby’s shots. You can ask your doctor if your baby is on schedule for the recommended shots.
• This month, your baby may be:
  • Crawling
  • Starting to take small steps towards walking
  • Standing on own or while holding onto something or someone
  • Using simple words and understanding simple commands

My Questions and Notes

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Tip: Does your baby get into everything? Keep a drawer or cabinet full of safe things like plastic bowls, spoons, and toys, so baby can explore and play safely.
Things to Note or Remember

Your baby is now 11 months old – just a month away from that big first birthday!

Below are some things you can do until your baby’s next regularly scheduled check-up:

- Use your chart to help keep track of your baby’s shots. You can ask your baby’s doctor if your baby is on schedule for the recommended shots.
- Note if your baby is:
  - Shifting from lying down to sitting up on own
  - Taking steps toward walking or walking on own
  - Speaking simple words
  - Understanding simple commands
  - Drinking from a cup

My Questions and Notes

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Month 12

Schedule a Well-Baby Check-Up

Remember to ask during the appointment when you need to bring your baby back. Schedule the next well-baby check-up before you leave.
The Well-Baby Check-Up

It’s your baby’s first birthday! Congratulations!

Like your earlier well-baby check-ups, below are some things the doctor may do during the physical exam for your baby’s 12-month check-up:

- Take measurements like weight, height, and head size. Ask the doctor or nurse how much your baby has grown since the last visit.
- Check your baby’s eyes, mouth, and body movements
- Listen to your baby’s heart
- Check genitals (“private parts”) — mostly with male babies

Tip: Congratulations! Your baby is 1 year old!
After baby’s 1-year visit to the doctor, plan visits when baby is 15 and 18 months old.

Tip: Has your baby been to the dentist? If not, talk to your doctor about taking your baby for a check-up. It will help keep your baby’s mouth healthy!
Remember:

Shots can help prevent your baby from getting some serious illnesses. During this visit, your baby may receive one or more shots.

This month, your doctor may do the first anemia (low iron in blood) and lead tests on your baby. If needed, these other tests may be done:

- Hearing
- Blood pressure
- Vision
- Tuberculosis
Questions for Your Doctor

Below are a few questions you might want to ask:

- How should I brush my baby’s teeth?
- What are the best ways to feed my baby?
- How long should my baby drink from a bottle?
- When can I give my baby cow’s milk?
Check-up Chart

This chart can be used as a tool to record your baby’s development during the first year.

My Baby’s Name: __________________________________________

My Baby’s Date of Birth: __________________________________

Pediatrician’s Name and Contact Information:
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First Few Weeks

Date:_________________________ Shots:_________________________
Height:______________________
Weight:______________________
Head Size:___________________

Next Visit:___________________
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Height: ___________________________ Weight: ___________________________
Head Size: ___________________________
Next Visit: ___________________________

Month 6
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Height: ___________________________ Weight: ___________________________
Head Size: ___________________________
Next Visit: ___________________________

Month 7
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Height: ___________________________ Weight: ___________________________
Head Size: ___________________________
Next Visit: ___________________________

Month 8
Date: ___________________________ Shots: ___________________________
Height: ___________________________ Weight: ___________________________
Head Size: ___________________________
Next Visit: ___________________________
My Baby’s Milestones
Healthy Beginnings for Babies is funded by Merck in partnership with the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition and the National Medical Association.

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