

Additional Information

Today's Date: _____

Baby's Height: _____

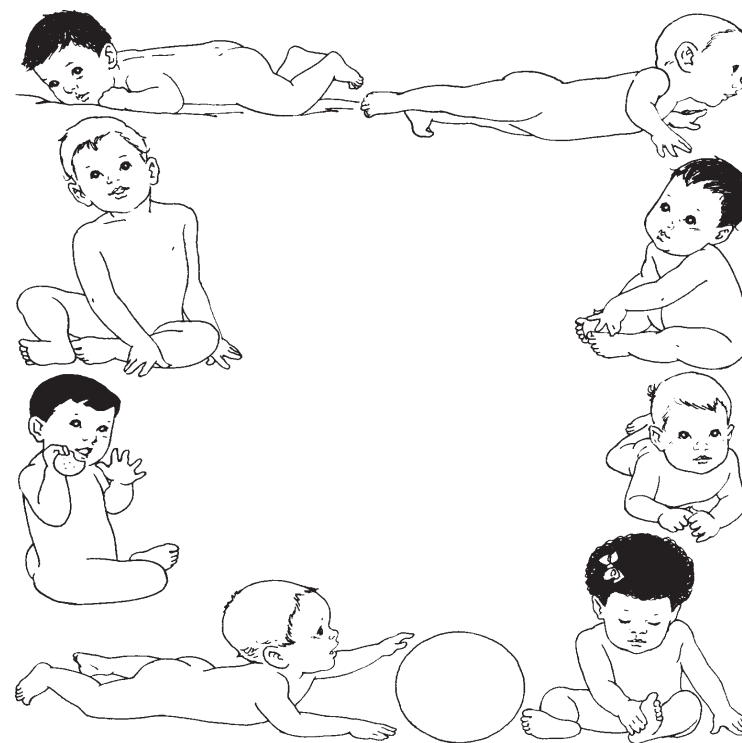
Baby's Weight: _____

Baby's Head Circumference: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Next Appointment: _____

Kent County Wants Healthy Babies



Your Five Month Old



Kent County Health Department
Maternal Infant Health Program
700 Fuller Ave., NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616/632-7100
www.accesskent.com

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Kent County Health Department
Maternal Infant Health Program
Childhood Education Series

How Your Baby is Growing

Head - your baby can hold her head steady when sitting up.

Eyes - your baby can see different shades of colors. She will like bright colors best (red, blue, or yellow). She likes to look at different shapes. Her favorite shape will be the shape of your face. She will try to copy faces she sees.

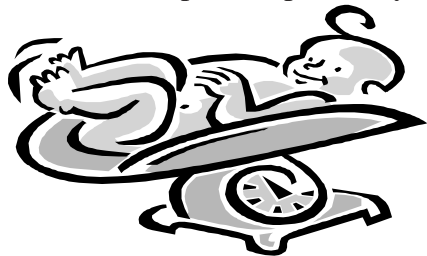
Ears - your baby notices different sounds you make. She notices how these combine to make words and sentences. She may try to repeat sounds she hears.

Mouth - you will start to hear your baby raise and drop her voice just like you do when you talk. She will concentrate on vowel sounds like “ma-ma”, “da-da”, “na-na”, or “bah-bah”.

Muscle Development - your baby may be rolling over at this time. She can play with her toes and may even suck her toes. She may begin to bear some weight on her legs for a few minutes as you support her.

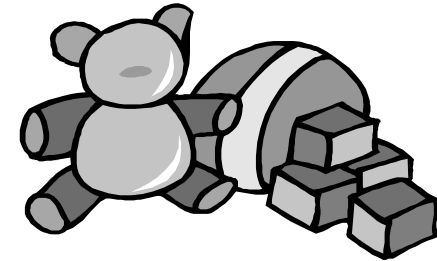
Social Development - your baby is beginning to develop some new social skills. Some of these are: 1) responding to games; 2) telling people apart; and 3) gaining confidence from the security of close family members. She may suddenly become afraid of a stranger and freeze or even scream when a stranger approaches. This is understandable. Adjusting to strangers is hard for your baby. Take your time introducing her to others. Let strangers approach her one at a time and be sure a familiar face stays close by.

Emotional Development - your baby may show anticipation by waving and raising her arms to be picked up and may even cling close to you when you hold her.



Muscle Development

- Continue tummy time and watch her push with her hands to raise her chest off the floor.
- Place toys slightly out of reach to encourage her to stretch or turn.
- Most of her playtime should be in a safe place on the floor where she can explore and has the freedom to strengthen her muscles and improve her balance. Exersaucers and walkers do not help a baby develop muscle strength or balance.



Sleep Patterns

Your baby still needs at least two naps a day.

She may sleep 8 to 11 hours a night.

Your baby needs to learn that nighttime is the time for sleeping. A bedtime routine will help her calm down from a busy day and learn to fall asleep on her own.

If she stirs at night but is not fussing, give her a chance to put herself back to sleep.



Interacting with Your Baby

Play is the way your baby finds out about herself. Help her find out about how things look, feel and sound.

Awareness

- Your baby is becoming more aware of her own body especially her hands and feet. Play games such as “This Little Piggy” and wiggle each toe as you say the rhyme.

Sight

- Show your baby her face in a mirror.
- Play “Peek-a-Boo” with her. When you hide your face, she will look for you. She will begin to know you are there before she even sees you.
- She will like to look at bright colors and different shapes.



Hearing

- Tell your baby what you are doing when you feed, change, bathe or dress her.
- Name the items she sees.
- Call her by name and see if she turns her head to find you.
- Say words correctly when you talk to her. Don't use baby talk.

Touch

- Once your baby begins to reach and grab, she will explore new things with her hands and mouth. Give her things she can safely put in her mouth (teething ring, rattle).
- Give her toys that have places for her fingers or toys made of different materials that make sounds.

Feeding Your Baby

All babies develop differently. Some may be ready for solid foods between four and six months. Talk with your doctor, nurse or dietitian before starting solid foods. Some signs of readiness for solid foods are that she:

- can hold up her head without help from you
- can sit up with little support
- shows interest in food
- readily accepts food
- increases the number and frequency of feedings



When your baby is ready for solid food, give her plain, dry infant rice or barley cereal mixed with formula or breast milk. Use a spoon to feed it to her.

Offer her cereal twice a day. Babies usually do not accept solid foods when they are really hungry. In the beginning, try feeding her an hour or two after her bottle.

Once your baby has mastered cereal twice a day, it is time to offer her strained, pureed vegetables. Introduce fruit last. Desserts have little nutritional value - avoid giving them to her. Do not feed her directly from the jar.

When you start a new food, feed it to your baby for three to five days. Use only single ingredient foods. Watch her for allergic reactions. Signs of a reaction might be:

- rashes
- stool changes (constipation or loose stools)
- vomiting

Babies are messy eaters. It is a good idea to have a vinyl mat or sheet under the high chair. As she is learning to eat, she may spit out the food.

Breast milk and formula are still important for your baby. You may notice her trying to grab the bottle. It is still important for you to hold her during a feeding to interact by talking, singing or rocking. Feedings are a social time.

Topic of the Month Coping

Your baby has learned to love you. She wants to be with you all the time. She does not understand that you need time to yourself! She may be upset if you pay attention to someone else. She wants to sit on your lap, pat you, pull at you, play with you, and “kiss” you. Sometimes your baby’s love is too much for you. You need time for yourself. Try to leave your baby with at least one other person (but not more than three other people) that she knows and can trust. She will cry when you leave. Tell your baby when you are leaving. Do not sneak out. (This makes her feel like she is lost.) Tell her “I’ll be back soon.” Tell her when you are back again. Say “Here I am” in a cheerful way so she can feel okay again. You are her special person. When you are with her, she feels loved, happy and secure.

Knowing that someone you trust is watching your baby will help you enjoy your free time. Be sure the person you leave your baby with knows basic child care and is loving with her. Here are some things to tell the person watching her:

1. The address and phone number here are: _____

2. I will be at: _____

3. My doctor’s name and number is: _____

Your Baby’s Safety

Always know where your baby is and what she is doing!

Falls/Injuries

Never put your baby in a walker. They are unsafe. Babies in a walker can move three feet per second. This is faster than you can react.

Remember it is important to use the safety straps that come with a stroller, baby chair, or shopping cart.

Your baby is becoming more active now. Do not leave her alone on a couch, changing table or bed.

Keep a watchful eye on your baby when other children are around.

Never leave your baby alone in her crib with the side rails down.

Never leave your baby alone with a pet.

Never leave your baby alone in a bath or near water. She can drown quickly in just a few inches of water.

Now is the time to take down the mobile over your baby’s crib. At this age, she could pull it down by herself.

Your baby should continue to be placed in a rear facing car seat. The safest place for her is in the middle of the back seat. The car seat must be held tightly by the seat belt for it to be safe.

Remember to have at least one working smoke detector in your home!

