

# Baby's First Wish

Cooperative Extension Service  
New Mexico State University

A happy & healthy life

Dear  
Parents:  
Your baby's  
world is  
growing!

Have you noticed how your baby is fascinated by her hands? How she makes a fist? Claps her hands? How she just loves to poke your face with her fingers? At this age, your baby is interested in everything!

You can encourage her wonderful curiosity by playing simple games with her. Clap hands to music together. Play peek-a-boo, or a naming game, where you point to different things and name them.

Remember that playing is a form of teaching and you are your baby's most important teacher.

## 7 Months Old



## A New Independence

Temper and frustration—  
a part of growing pains

Your baby moves into another room to explore and satisfy his curiosity. He doesn't see you, gets scared, and starts to howl. Or you leave the room. He begins to cry

because he is frightened of being separated from you. Or he drops a toy out sight. He screams with anger because he can no longer see or get to it, and he wants it back immediately.

Now that your baby is able to get around more on his own, life is more exciting, but scary and frustrating, too. Don't be surprised if he begins to show some signs of temper or frustration—most babies do at this age. Temper and frustration are very normal. They will pass as he gets older, feels more comfortable, and is more skillful in moving around.

Give him some extra cuddling during these bursts of independence. Remember that he can always use some loving, and so can you!

# What's It Like To Be 7 Months Old?



- I balance myself and sit for awhile without any support.
- I keep my legs straight when you pull me up, and I try to stand by myself.
- I explore my body with my mouth and hands.
- I can keep my diaper dry for up to 2 hours.
- I may have some teeth.
- I feed myself finger foods—I'm pretty messy!
- I play with a spoon and a cup, but I'm not so good at using them yet.

## How I Respond

- I want to be included in all family activities.
- I like to see and touch myself in the mirror.
- I get excited when I see a picture of a baby, thinking it's me.
- I like toys that make noise like bells, music boxes, or rattles.

- I like to grab, shake, and bang things, and put them in my mouth.

## How I Grow

- I creep on my stomach—I may even crawl.
- I also get around on my back by raising my behind and pushing with my feet.

## How I Talk

- I imitate the sounds I hear—that's how I learn.
- I say several sounds like ma, mu, da, di, and ba, all in one breath.



## How I Understand

- I concentrate better now and spend lots of time examining things.
- I know the difference in the size of blocks.
- I can tell if something is near or far.
- I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look and talk.



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## How I Feel

- I fear strangers, so stay with me when they are around.
- I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.
- I feel playful and like to tease.

Remember, *Baby's First Wish* describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Children may do things earlier or later than those described in *Baby's First Wish*. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor.

# Feeding Your Baby

You can start feeding your baby strained meats and other protein foods, breads, and fruit juices.



Here's a single-ingredient recipe that you can prepare at home and freeze.

## Egg Yolk Puree

Cook one egg in simmering water 15 to 20 minutes. Remove shell. Remove yolk, and puree with 1 tablespoon formula or milk until smooth.

Serve, or date and label contents, freeze, and keep no longer than 1 month.

*Note:* Use only the yolk. Egg white is often not given until late in the first year to avoid problems with allergies. Use the egg white in the family's casseroles, salads, or sandwiches.

## Protein Foods

Between the seventh and the ninth month, you can start adding meats, or meat alternatives, whole grain or enriched breads, and fruit juices to your baby's daily diet.

You can either buy ready-to-eat meat alternatives, such as poultry, fish, and egg yolk, or prepare them at home. You should give your baby about 1 to 2 tablespoons, twice a day. Prepare or buy only plain, single ingredient items, such as jars of strained chicken, strained beef, strained liver, and strained fish.

Remember, there is as much protein in one jar of strained chicken as there is in more than four jars of strained chicken and noodles.

## Foods to Prepare

- Fresh and frozen fruit juice without added sugar.
- Fresh and frozen meats, poultry, or fish without added salt.

## Foods to Avoid

- Fruit drinks and imitation flavored fruitaides.
- Meat products with salt, sugar, seasonings, and other additives (for example, bacon, bologna, hot dogs, frozen meat pies, etc.).

## Fruit Juices

You can offer your baby 3 to 4 ounces of a rich in vitamin C fruit juice, such as orange or grapefruit.

## Breads

You can try giving your baby up to one serving of whole grain or enriched breads, such as toast, crackers, or hard biscuits. (If your baby is teething, chewing on biscuits will feel good.)

## About Weaning

Some mothers decide to wean their babies from the breast or bottle about now. Others wait until later. When you decide to wean your baby, try to do it gradually over a period of several weeks. During the weaning period, be sure to give your baby some extra hugs and kisses.

# Games Babies Play

## The Mirror: An eyes-and-hands game

### Purpose of Game

- Helps your baby be aware of her own appearance.

### How To Play

- Stand in front of a mirror with your baby, and point to her reflection.
- Using her name, say, "I see Tina. Where is Tina? Find Tina. Look at Tina." Encourage her to point to herself in the mirror.
- Still sitting in front of the mirror, do the same thing with objects. Pick them up one at a time and move them behind your baby's head.
- Name the objects, telling your baby something about them, such as "This is a ball, and it's round."
- Then ask your baby, "Where is the ball?" and encourage her to point to it in the mirror.



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### Other eyes-and-hands games

- Let your baby play with toys in front of a wall mirror or dresser mirror.
- Let other people sit with your baby in front of the mirror and say their names.



#### Coming Next:

- Fear of Strangers
- Babyproofing the Home

# Be Your Own Best Friend— Give Yourself a Pat on the Back

Remember how you felt just before your baby was born? And during those first hectic months?

Now may be a good time to think about how your feelings as a parent have changed during these past months.

Are you feeling more confident and relaxed now about bringing up your baby? Are there still times when you feel unsure of yourself and guilty that you're not the "perfect" parent?

Well, you know that there is no

such thing as the "perfect" parent.

Often we expect too much from ourselves. It's impossible to be patient, understanding, and loving all the time. We just try to do the best we can. Yet many parents feel guilty and discouraged, if they don't live up to how they think they should be as a parent. They have a whole list of "shoulds," such as:

- I should never get mad at my baby.
- I should always put the baby's

needs ahead of mine.

- I should be patient at all times.
- I should always have dinner ready when my partner comes home, no matter how tired I am.

What are some of your "shoulds"? One way to find out is to make a list. Try, for example, to fill in the following sentences. Just write down any thoughts that come to your mind:

• A good mother should \_\_\_\_\_

• When my baby cries, I should \_\_\_\_\_

• When I'm tired, and my baby is cranky, I should \_\_\_\_\_

• As a parent, I should never \_\_\_\_\_

• As a parent, I should always \_\_\_\_\_

Now make up some of your own "should" sentences.

You might want to think about where your "shoulds" are coming from. Your own parents? Your friends?

Don't be too tough on yourself. Instead of putting yourself down with your list of "shoulds," try to accept your feelings and realize it's not easy to be all things to all people—even little babies. Remember,

too ... nobody's perfect.

Be a good friend to yourself.

# Questions



**Q.** “Ever since we had the baby, there’s been a lot of strain between me and my partner. We never seem to have time just to sit and talk anymore. I can’t seem to tell him how I feel. Things really seem to be piling up between us. Do you have any suggestions?”

**A.** Many new parents feel just as you do. Their lives are so busy with all the added demands a new baby brings that it’s hard to find the time to work things out.

As difficult as it may be, it’s important to make the time and openly talk about what’s bothering you. Chances are your partner has been storing up some gripes too.

Here are some ways to make it easier for both of you:

- **Set up a “date”**—Reserve a special time (or times) each week

when you can be together to talk without distractions.

- **Use I messages**—Tell him how you are feeling without blaming him. Make sure you put YOURSELF in your communication. Instead of saying “You always put me down,” say “I feel put down when you tell me...” By using “I” messages, your partner will not feel blamed or accused
- **Be direct**—Say what you mean, rather than hoping he will guess or know what you mean. Instead of saying “The living room has been looking messy lately,” say “I get upset when you leave your boots in the living room and expect me to pick them up.”
- **Avoid the question trap** — Asking questions is often a poor substitute for direct communication. Instead of “Why didn’t you call to tell me you’d be late?” say

“I was worried that something had happened to you when you didn’t come home at the usual time. Next time call me, so I won’t worry.”

## Tip:

When you feel you are about to ask a question, stop and listen to yourself. Try to identify your real feelings and then say them in a statement instead of a question.

- **Be sure to listen**—Give him a chance to air his feelings and gripes. Don’t interrupt, jump to conclusions, preach, or quickly offer advice. Check back with him to see if you really understood him. For example, say “Let me see if I understand. Are you saying that ...?”

It’s normal for new parents to have many mixed feelings. If you use these basic communication skills, you may be able to find solutions to problems before they get out of hand.

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If you have questions, call your county Extension office. Phone numbers are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

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A good book to read on parenting is *A Good Enough Parent* by Bruno Bettelheim, and published by Knopf in 1987. You can purchase it from a bookstore or look for it in your public library.

NMSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE OFFICES

# Baby's First Wish

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Another 4-H Prevention Program

Order Alert: *Baby's First Wish* is an educational program from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service. This newsletter series is designed for parents with young children. To order the series, contact your county Extension Office. 2001

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7 Months

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