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SP418-G-Healthy Children_5 Months Old

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"SP418-G-Healthy Children_5 Months Old," The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, SP418-G 11/09(Rev.) 3M E12-5320-00-029-10 10-0079, http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexfami/12

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UT Extension
SP418-G

PARENTS COMMUNITIES

Healthy Children Ready to Learn

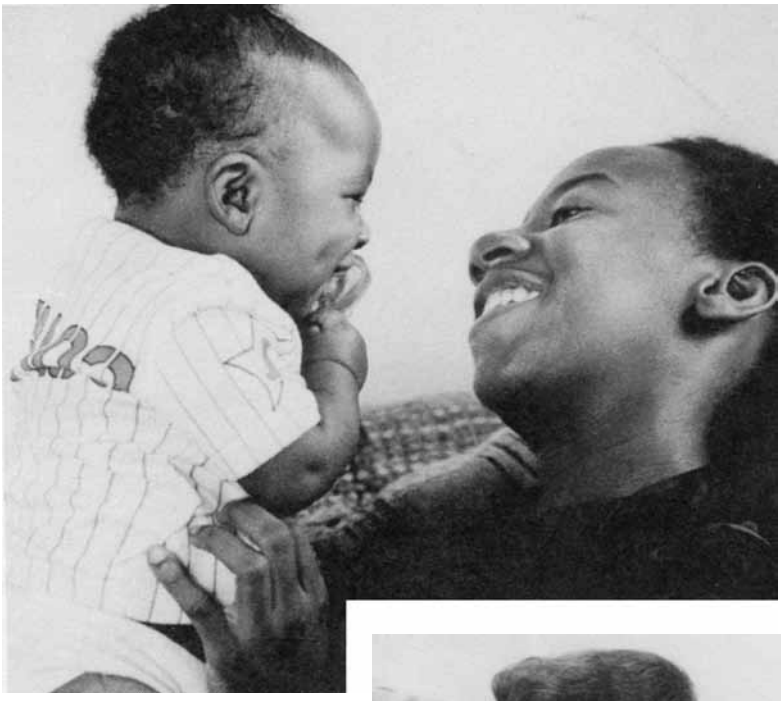
5 MONTHS OLD

Dear Parents . . . Your baby is a bundle of energy!

Your baby is probably no longer content to just sit quietly and look around. He wants to move all the time and in all directions!

Babies at this age usually spend a lot of time examining, exploring, tasting, feeling, touching and learning about EVERYTHING. As a result, your baby will demand more of your time and attention.

To help you live with this new energy spurt, try to keep your sense of humor and your patience. You will enjoy each other more if you can laugh together!



TOYS ARE FOR LEARNING

From this age on, your baby will be very interested in toys that can be touched, examined, chewed and sucked, such as rubber teethers, plastic discs and rubber beads.

Your baby learns from play and likes to explore each toy to get the feel of it. She likes to take a toy and twist, shake, suck, move it from hand to hand, and bang it on other objects.

She is learning about nearness and distance, inside and outside, and position and placement of objects. She is discovering the world of objects and developing a sense of space, form and texture.

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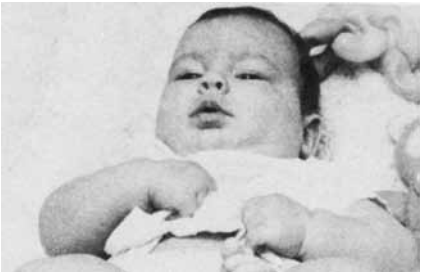


WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 5 MONTHS OLD?

How I Grow

- I rock, roll and twist my body.
- I kick my feet and suck on my toes.
- I keep my head and back straight when I sit, if you support my body.
- I stand up (if you hold me under my arms), jump up and down, and stamp my feet.
- I have pretty good aim when I grab at something.

How I Talk

- I watch your mouth and try to imitate you when you talk to me.
- I make sounds like ee, ah, ooh, da-da, bye-bye, ma-ma.
- I babble to myself, to my toys and to people — I get attention that way!

How I Respond

- I may cry when I see strangers.
- I smile at familiar faces and voices.
- I look around when I hear sounds.
- I make sounds and interrupt your conversations because I want attention.
- I want to touch, hold, turn, shake and taste everything.
- I put a lot of energy into everything I do.

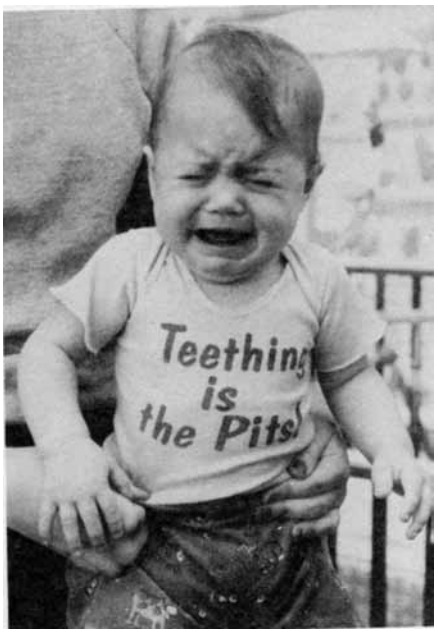
How I Understand

- I recognize my name.
- I can tell the difference between myself and others in the mirror.
- I am beginning to learn about my feelings.
- I look for something if I drop it.
- I remember what I just did.

How I Feel

- I cling to you when you hold me.
- I stop crying when you talk to me.
- I show fear, anger and disgust.

Q&A



"I think my daughter is teething. She wants to chew on everything, she is cranky and she drools a lot. What can I do to make her feel more comfortable?"

It is quite normal for babies to get some teeth at this age. The first teeth usually appear at 6 months, but some babies get them as early as 3 months. Others don't get any teeth until they are a year or older.

As teeth push through the gums (usually the first teeth are the lower incisors), your baby may feel some soreness, and become cranky and irritable. You can ease the soreness by putting an ice cube in a clean cloth and rubbing it on her gums for a few minutes. Chilling a plastic or rubber teething ring in the refrigerator and then letting your baby chew on it may also relieve her.

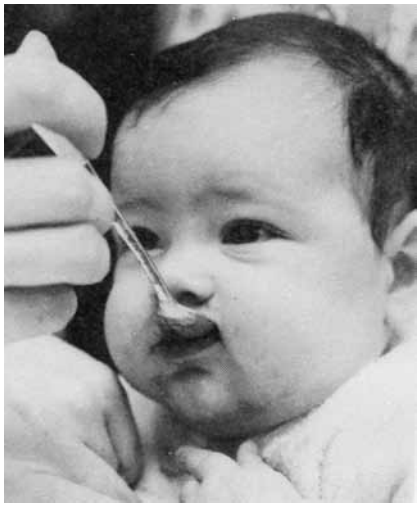
Your baby may also drool a lot and have some diarrhea. If she continues to have diarrhea, it may not be teething that is bothering her. DON'T BLAME FEVER, VOMITING, DIARRHEA OR OTHER SIGNS OF ILLNESS ON TEETHING. If your baby shows any of these signs, have her checked by your doctor or clinic.

FEEDING YOUR

Your baby may be ready to eat some new foods.

ONE NEW FOOD AT A TIME

Try one new food at a time and feed it every day for several days. Start with a single ingredient rather than mixed foods — for example, rice cereal instead of mixed cereal, or applesauce instead of mixed-fruit dessert. Once in a while, a new food causes vomiting, diarrhea or a skin rash. By starting only one new food and by using a simple food, you will know what is to blame should a problem arise.



VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

You can start with a half teaspoon of a vegetable or fruit, one to two times a day. For example, give the baby strained carrots for a few days before introducing another vegetable, such as strained squash. Gradually increase the amount to 2 teaspoons.

When your baby has tried a few vegetables and fruits, start strained meats. These are good sources of the iron your baby needs to grow and develop. Plain meats have more iron than the vegetable-meat and noodle dinners. These are mostly vegetable and/or starch.

COMMERCIALLY PREPARED FOODS

You can buy jars of commercial baby foods that are specially designed for infants. Remember to get only single-ingredient foods. Avoid using regular commercially canned foods for making baby food. Regular canned foods, such as tuna, Vienna sausages and spaghetti (that are not specially made for babies), may have too much salt, spices, sugar or fat. Although these foods may be used safely for adults and older children, they may not be as good for infants.

HOME-PREPARED FOODS

You may want to prepare some baby foods at home. Equipment can be as simple as a sieve or a strainer, a blender or baby-food mill. It can be convenient and money-saving to use some of the regular family foods. However, most of the family's food is unsuitable for infants since it is usually prepared with salt, spices, sugar or fat. You will have to take time to prepare foods separately, or remove your baby's portion before salt, sugar or other seasonings are added.

BABY

CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness is a must when preparing, storing, heating or serving baby food.

Before handling baby food, wash your hands thoroughly with hot water and soap. Clean your fingernails and check for infected cuts and hangnails. Infections can carry bacteria.

Keep equipment and surfaces spotlessly clean. Wash utensils in hot, soapy water. Rinse under hot running water and air dry. Do not dry with a towel.

Clean and sanitize cutting boards after cutting fresh meats before using them for anything else.

COOKING METHODS

STEAMING is one of the best cooking methods to preserve vitamins and minerals, particularly for vegetables. Use a steam basket, colander or sieve to hold the food above boiling water and cook in the rising steam. Food may also be steam-cooked in an oven if it is wrapped in foil or placed in a covered roaster.

ROASTING AND BROILING are both acceptable methods of cooking baby foods. Foods will probably need added liquid (meat broth or formula) to puree smoothly.

MICROWAVE COOKING is a good method, especially for vegetables that can be cooked quickly in very little water.

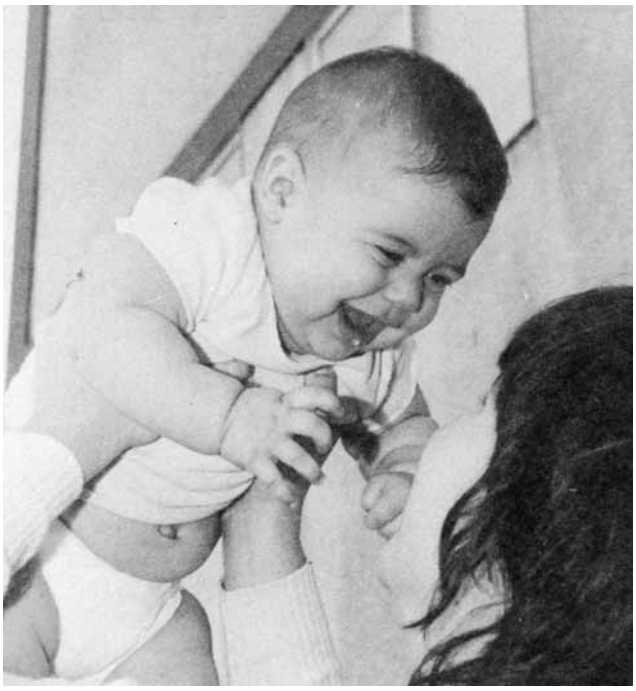
BOILING is an acceptable method of cooking vegetables and fruit, if you're careful to use only a small amount of water. Some of the water-soluble nutrients will dissolve in the cooking water. You can save these nutrients by using the cooking water to thin the pureed food to eating consistency. Simmering is a recommended method of cooking lean meat to prepare it for pureeing.

SUITABLE FOODS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR BABY

Fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables without sugar, salt or seasonings. Check with your UT Extension Office for information on how to can and freeze foods safely.

GAMES BABIES PLAY

DIFFICULT SOUNDS



PURPOSE OF GAME

- Encourage your baby to imitate sounds and words.

HOW TO PLAY

- Hold your baby in your arms and first let her relax.
- Make sounds like “brr-own,” “grrr-ate,” “bzzz-y,” “uh-oh” “aaa-all gone.”
- Face her so she can watch your lips.
- Nuzzle or cuddle her after you make the sounds.
- Laugh, smile or hug her gently when she makes the sounds.

OTHER COMMUNICATION GAMES

- Any sound or word imitation games you play while facing your baby.

REMEMBER . . .

Check with your doctor, clinic or public health nurse for information about the immunizations that your baby needs. Keep a record of all shots and immunizations that your baby needs. Keep a record of all shots and immunizations your baby receives and the dates they are given. You will need this information when your child registers at school or at day care centers.

WATCH OUT!

SAFETY & HIGH CHAIRS

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in one year, 7,000 children have accidents involving high chairs. The majority are under 4 years of age, and nearly 25 percent are children 1 year old or younger.

Things to look for in a high chair to insure your baby's safety:

- Well built, sturdy.
- Wide at base so it won't tip over easily.
- Waist and crotch restraining straps that are not connected to the tray to hold your baby in the chair.
- Tray that locks securely on each side.
- Belt buckles and tray locks that are handy for you to use, but which your baby can't work.
- Caps or plugs on tubing that are firmly attached and cannot be pulled off and choke a child
- If the chair folds, it should have an effective locking device to keep it from collapsing.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF HIGH CHAIR SAFETY:

- DO always use seat belt and crotch strap.
- DO be sure tray is securely locked in place.
- DO be sure your baby's hands are out of the way when you lock the tray.
- DO be sure there are no sharp edges or hardware to cut her or you.
- DON'T let your baby stand in the chair.
- DON'T leave the chair too close to a table or counter. She can push against it and overturn the chair.
- DON'T leave her alone in the chair.
- DON'T let other children climb on the chair.

DISCIPLINE - IT STARTS EARLY

Now that your baby is beginning to explore, you need to make sure his world is safe. Now's the time to begin using some controls, such as baby-proofing the house, or distracting him from doing something harmful or annoying.

These controls are the beginning of discipline. Discipline also means guiding a child's actions to make him acceptable to others and to himself.

Babies under a year old are too young to understand the reasons for stopping something they are doing. For example, your baby may love to throw toys on the floor. He likes to hear the noise, watch the toys bounce and thinks it's a great game!

It doesn't occur to him that the noise is bothering you. You may even think that he is being defiant, but he only thinks that toy-throwing is fun.

How to get the baby to stop? Remove the toys and distract him with something else he can do. Give him a hug, too.

If you can strike a balance between providing necessary controls, a sense of humor and loving care, your baby will learn how to think and act responsibly.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent at your county UT Extension office.

COMING NEXT

In . . . HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN

- How to Help Baby Sleep Through the Night
- How Children Learn from Parents

PARENTS COMMUNITIES Healthy Children Ready to Learn

HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN was originally developed as the Parent Express series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material was adapted for use in Tennessee by Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Janie Burney and others. Contact Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Denise Brandon for information about this publication.

RESOURCES

From a Bookstore or Library:

Touchpoints: Birth to Three by T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua D. Sparrow, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

Your Baby's First Year (Second Edition), American Academy of Pediatrics, Bantam, New York, 2005.

Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense (3rd Edition) by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 2000.

From the Extension Office:

Preparing Formula for Your Baby, SP445-A, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2005

When is Your Baby Ready for Solid Food? SP445-B, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2000.

Making Your Own Baby Food, SP 445-C, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2000

Tips on Infant Feeding: 4-6 Months, SP 445-D, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2001.

Selecting a Quality Child Care Center, SP455, by Matt Devereaux, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

From the Internet:

http://extension.tennessee.edu

http://fcs.tennessee.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm

Visit the UT Extension Web site at http://www.utextension.utk.edu/ and the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/

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