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## **SP418-E-Healthy Children\_3 Months Old**

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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# Healthy Children Ready to Learn

## 3 MONTHS OLD

Dear Parents —  
 You and your baby  
 talk through body  
 language!

Your baby doesn't use words yet, but he will understand a universal language — body language. This is a language that doesn't need words. You can tell your baby you love him by giving him a hug, singing a song or gently rocking him to music. You will find that he talks back to you in the same way. He will give you a smile, a giggle, a coo or a hearty chuckle.



**YOU DON'T NEED  
 WORDS TO TELL  
 YOUR BABY YOU  
 CARE.**

# WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 3 MONTHS OLD?



## How I Grow

- I hold my head and back pretty straight when you support my body.
- I lift my head, lean on my elbows, arch my back and rock when I'm on my stomach.
- I move my arms and legs a lot.
- I push with my arms and legs when I am held.
- I touch my face with my hands.
- I grab at things, but sometimes I miss.

## How I Talk

- I coo simple sounds, like ooh, ah, ae.
- I answer sounds I hear by gurgling, cooing and squealing.
- I don't cry as much as before. Have you noticed?



## How I Respond

- I react with my whole body to familiar faces.
- I get excited when I see people I know, prepare to breast-feed or see my bottle.
- I stop sucking to hear sounds. Then I look and suck at the same time.
- I follow sounds with my eyes.
- I like listening — talk to me in simple sentences.

## How I Understand

- I'm beginning to find out that I am a person.
- I'm beginning to show that I have a memory.
- I recognize different family members.

## How I Feel

- I love being cuddled.
- I don't like being left alone.



# Q&A

## When I take my baby out with me, who should I dress first — baby or me?

It's easier if you dress first, then get your baby ready.

When dressing your baby before going out, try to make it an enjoyable time for both of you. Talk gently and smile at her while changing her clothes.

Some baby clothes have tiny buttons, little loops and small snaps. Maybe they were a gift from someone and though they look very nice, they are difficult to get onto a squirming baby. If you are in a rush, it may seem like your baby is trying to do everything to make it more difficult for you. She may be fighting mad from being handled too much, and she can get overheated from wriggling around.



When you are going out, the decisions you make about

what you will wear also apply to your baby. If it is chilly outside and you need a sweater, your baby will probably need something warm, too. If the sun is shining brightly

enough for you to need a sun hat or sunglasses, your baby will probably need a hat, too, to protect her head from sunburn and to shade her eyes.

## REMEMBER...

All babies are different and grow at their own pace. So don't worry if your baby isn't doing exactly the same things other babies at the same age do.

# FEEDING YOUR BABY

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*Your baby spends a lot of time feeding. One of the most important parts of feeding is the warmth and pleasure he feels while being held and fed.*

If you are bottle feeding, don't prop the bottle and leave your baby alone, or put him to bed with a bottle. There are several reasons why. There is a small opening or tube between your baby's throat and his ear. If your baby is lying down and sucking on his bottle, a small amount of formula may travel from the throat to the ear and cause infection. Also, the formula that may remain in his mouth when he falls asleep with a bottle can cause tooth decay. And leaving your baby to feed himself robs both of you of a loving and relaxing time together.

Remember, your baby is not necessarily hungry every time he cries. When babies are fed too often, they eat less at each meal. Their stomachs empty more quickly, and empty stomachs soon make them hungry again. Also, offering a bottle just to keep baby quiet teaches him to eat when he is uncomfortable. This may lead to feeding problems later on.

During the first four to six months, breast milk or formula will be enough to satisfy your baby's nutritional needs. After six months, your baby will start eating other foods such as infant cereals, pureed vegetables, fruit and meats. But you should continue feeding breast milk or formula.



# GAMES BABIES PLAY

## *Getting-the-Feel-of-Things: Using-the-Senses Game*

### PURPOSE OF GAME

- Teaches how to tell the difference between things through looking, feeling, tasting, smelling and hearing.
- Encourages your baby to explore the world by using different body movements — for example, banging, mouthing, dropping and rubbing.

- Encourages your baby to examine different objects when alone.

### HOW TO PLAY

- Choose various harmless objects from around the house with different shapes (square, round, hard, soft, fuzzy, long, short, sticky).
- Show the objects one at a time and let your baby examine them.
- Watch the movements your baby makes — she will treat each object differently. She is learning to change her body movements to fit the object she is examining.



# WATCH OUT!

## BABY TOYS CAN BE DANGEROUS

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns parents to be very careful about the kinds of toys they give their babies. Make sure that no part of the toy is small enough to fit into your baby's mouth, as he may choke on it. Toys that are smaller than 1¾ inches in diameter (about the size of a toilet paper tube) can choke your baby. Follow the recommended age on toys you purchase. Don't let infants and young children play with uninflated or broken balloons because they can choke on them. Look for toys that are well made and won't break or come apart. Avoid toys with sharp edges and points. Don't give your infant a baby rattle in the shapes shown here.

Telephone Receiver



Safety Pin



Clothespin



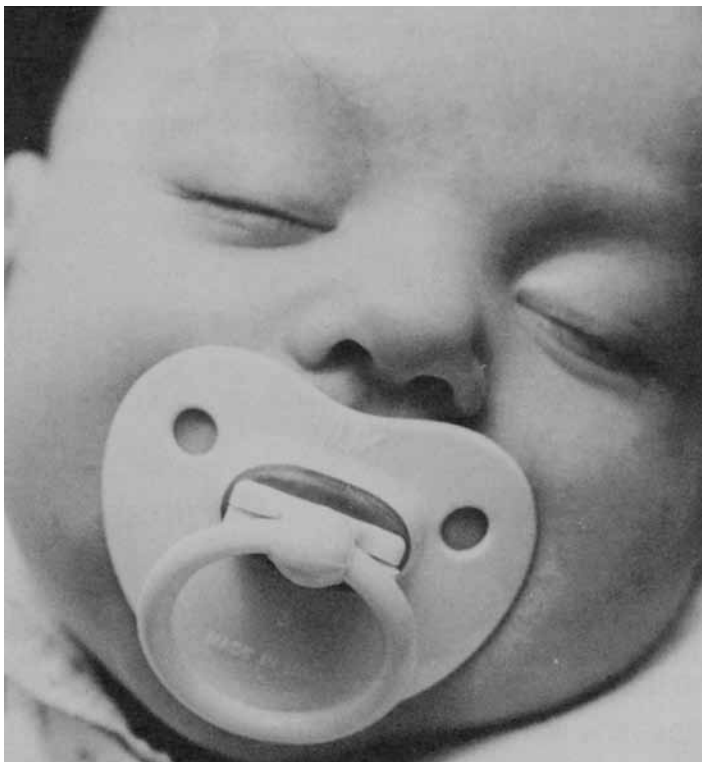
Barbell and Dumbbell



**Don't Give Your Baby These Shapes!**

## SUCKING, PACIFIERS AND LEARNING

*Babies will suck their own fingers or fists from birth. This is not always a sign of hunger. The need to suck is probably strongest during the first four months.*



*Sucking quiets your baby. It reduces hunger pangs and tension. Pacifiers can be substituted for fingers. But don't overuse pacifiers as a way of keeping your baby occupied. Be sure to clean pacifiers when they are dropped.*

*Sucking is also a learning experience for your baby. She will suck, then stop and look around. By the end of the third month, she will be able to look and suck at the same time. She is learning about the world around her while looking and studying everything.*

# L·O·O·S·E·N UP!

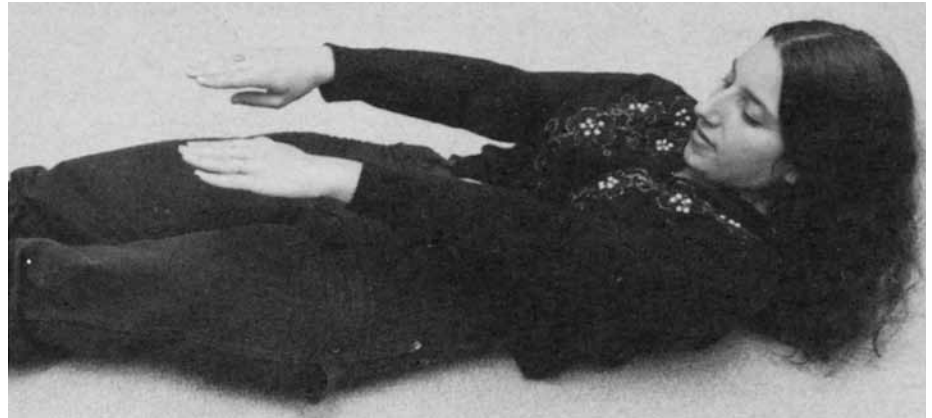
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With all the responsibilities in your life, exercise is one of the easiest to leave out, but it's one of the most important. Some of the best exercises are walking and swimming, but there are also plenty of good exercises to do at home. Here are two simple exercises that take just a few minutes and help to loosen up your body.

- Lie on the floor, on your back, and point to your toes.
- Raise your right leg slightly and stretch your left arm toward your raised leg.
- Repeat with opposite arm and leg.
- Repeat six times.
- Lie on the floor, on your back, with arms stretched out to shoulder level.
- Bend your knees and lift your feet up.
- Swing bent legs toward right, making sure your shoulders and arms are flat on the floor.
- Then swing legs to the left.
- Repeat six times.

## FOR ACHING MUSCLES

Many things can make your muscles ache — carrying your baby, ironing, writing, washing



dishes or doing any one thing for a long time. Try doing these exercises to relax.

- Lie down on a rug or bed with your legs straight and slightly apart. Stretch your arms high above your head.
- Then round your back and stretch your arms out in front of you, touching your chin to your chest.
- Repeat moving your arms up and down five times.

## TENSE NECK MUSCLES

### Shoulder Shrug

- Stand or sit in a comfortable position.
- Raise your shoulders to your ears, hold for a count of four, then drop your shoulders back to a normal position.
- Now rotate your right shoulder up, back down and around, first one way, then the other. Rotate

with your left shoulder, repeating the same motions. Then rotate both shoulders at the same time.

### Head Roll

- Stand or sit in a comfortable position.
  - Bend your head to the left. While breathing in, s-l-o-w-l-y roll your head back in a circle to the right.
  - Then breathe out as you circle forward until you are back where you started.
  - Now change directions, doing the same movements with your head bending to the right.
  - Repeat two or three times.
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If you have any questions or comments, please contact your Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent at your county UT Extension office.

# COMING NEXT

In ... *HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN*

- Open Letter from Baby
- Temper Tantrums



**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.

### 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, 2005.

### From the Internet:

<http://extension.tennessee.edu>

<http://fcs.tennessee.edu>

[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org)

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

[www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm](http://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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