



# Let's Grow

## Issue #2: 1-3 Months

**Welcome to the second issue of Let's Grow.**

What is more special for a new parent than their baby's first smile? A smile is your baby's way of communicating with you. They are telling you, "I want to interact." Show them you want to interact too by making eye contact, smiling back and making positive comments to them. You will see a big smile as they react your actions, tone of voice and facial expressions. The way you talk to your baby and the way you respond to their needs will influence how they grow. Your baby is learning about the world around them. Show them love and security during this new adventure.

Did you know that talking to your baby is important for their development? Even before babies understand language, they respond to their parent's voice. If you make your voice go up and down, fast and slow and sing songs it will be more interesting for them.

Baby Wants: (<https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/K06-E.pdf>)

For song and rhyme ideas visit: TIPS & STRATEGIES FOR BABIES – Strong Minds Strong Kids – Psychology Canada  
(<https://strongmindsstrongkids.org/en/babies-tips-strategies/?pageowner=caregivers>)



At this age, you can now take your baby just about anywhere you go. You'll still need a diaper bag with a change of clothes and maybe an assortment of little toys, but babies this age travel well and enjoy many of your activities. Even a walk around the block is an adventure filled with new sights and sounds. Talk about what you see and hear. Spending quality time together will take some planning, but the rewards will last a lifetime.

It is a great time to get out and meet other families and explore resources for parents in your community. EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. You can learn and play with your child, meet people and get advice from early childhood professionals. Call your local EarlyON Child and Family Centre, Library or 211 to find out what is available in your neighbourhood. You can also visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) to search for local resources.



You are my sunshine,  
my only sunshine  
You make me happy  
when skies are grey  
You'll never know dear,  
how much I love you  
Please don't take my  
sunshine away

- **Bruce County Children's Services: EarlyON Child and Family Centres | Bruce County**  
(<https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>)

- **Grey County Children's Services: EarlyON | Grey County**  
(<https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care/earlyon>)



# Caring for your Baby

## Be Wise - Immunize

- Immunization protects your baby from childhood diseases. It's easy and it's free! Your baby will be eligible for their first immunizations at two months old.
- Your baby's immunization card will say which vaccines are included. It is extremely important that you keep this record of immunization in a safe place where it will not get lost. You will need to show this record if your baby attends childcare and when your child starts school.
- Ask your health care provider or call Public Health for more information on immunization. Your Immunization Records
  - [www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Immunization/Your-Immunization-Records](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Immunization/Your-Immunization-Records)
- For Ontario's Immunization Schedule visit:
  - [www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization)
- For information on how to comfort babies during vaccination: *Reduce the pain of vaccination in babies*
  - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Oqa1Fag5eQ&t=7s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Oqa1Fag5eQ&t=7s)

## Not Feeling Well

- For health advice or general health information call Health Connect Ontario and get free access to a Registered Nurse 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Call 811 or TTY: 1-866-797-0007
- Virtual Urgent Care is available through Brightshores Health System, visit Virtual Urgent Care - Brightshores Health System
  - (<https://www.brightshores.ca/virtual-urgent-care/>) for more information.



# Feeding & Nutrition

## Growth Spurts

There may be times in the next several months when your baby seems to be hungry all the time. This is likely because of growth spurts and does not mean you need to start giving them solid food (some “advice-givers” might suggest this during these hungry times). Growth spurts commonly happen at around 10 days, 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months of age. Your baby may need to be fed more often for a few days. If you are breastfeeding, this will increase your milk supply and give your baby’s body the nutrients it needs to grow. Hold and cuddle your baby while you are feeding them. This is one of your baby’s favourite times to look at your face.

Has someone suggested giving infant cereal (pablum) to help your baby sleep through the night? These ideas are well intended but baby’s body isn’t ready yet. Their digestive system is immature, and they cannot digest solid foods well at this age. Cereal in baby’s tummy prevents them from getting the nutrition that their body needs. Breastmilk, or breastmilk substitute, is all that your baby needs to eat until they are 6 months old.

# Healthy Growth & Development

## Tummy to Play, Every Day

Tummy time is an important part of your baby’s daily routine. Tummy time for play helps your baby develop earlier control of their head and neck and helps them to strengthen their arms and shoulders. Place your baby on their tummy for a few minutes after each diaper change, then add a few more minutes of tummy time every day! For some ideas of games to play, visit <https://pathways.org/growth-development/0-3-months/games/>

## Baby’s Brain Development

Problems at home such as divorce, illness, drugs or violence can create stress for a baby. Stress can make it difficult for a baby to learn. When babies react to stressful situations, they use their brain to deal with problems, rather than to learn. It is best to reduce the baby’s contact with stress. Get the help you need to reduce the problems and stress in your home. Call 211 to learn about available community services.

## Understanding Baby’s Feelings

By this time, you might be able to understand some of your baby’s cries and behaviours. Certain behaviours such as smiling and looking in your direction with their eyes bright and wide let you know that they are feeling good about your interaction with them. You’re trying to make your baby happy and that makes them feel good about themselves. Your baby may not understand your words like “cute” and “adorable”, but they will know from your smile, your tone of voice, and the way you hold them, that you think that they are amazing!

Your baby also needs you to recognize and respect when they need a break or quiet time. It may be more obvious to you when your baby cries or squirms that they need some “me” time, but there are other subtle cues they may use, such as frowning, yawning and looking away. When you notice and respond to your baby’s cues, you are helping them develop positive feelings about themselves and your relationship with them. Your baby will not expect perfection from you. Trying is what’s important!

You can help your baby by:

- holding them securely, rocking them and cuddling them
- smiling at your baby
- talking to your baby while looking into their eyes
- speaking in a gentle tone of voice, singing to them
- responding to your baby’s coos, gurgles and babbling





## Let's Play!

Your baby needs you to talk to them and sing them lullabies. Making a connection with you is so important to your baby. Sing and talk during diaper changes, playtime, or anytime. It's not too early to start reading to your baby. Even though they don't understand much yet, they will love the sound of your voice and the natural highs and lows that come with storytelling.

You and your baby can have fun using some simple toys:

- Babies love black and white patterns at first.
- The sounds of a musical mobile soothe baby and the movement fascinates them.
- Velcro wrist band toys help baby to notice their hands.
- Babies enjoy toys and books with different textures on them.
- A mirror helps baby begin to figure out who they are.
- Rattles help baby to practice their grasp. Use only safety approved ones!
- An activity centre/play gym helps baby learn to reach and grasp.
- New activities take a lot of energy at first so baby might get tired quickly. Your baby will let you know if they need a break. With time you will get to know your baby's "cues" that tell you if they are interested (or not) in what you are doing together.

Cues that your baby is ready to play with you include:

- eyes wide and bright
- eye contact with you
- smiles
- smooth movements
- hands reaching out to you

*Round the Garden  
Round and round the garden  
Like a teddy bear  
One step, two step  
Tickle you there!*

*Round and round the forest  
Like a little deer  
One step, two step  
Tickle you there!*



To see video about baby's cues and behaviours, visit:  
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/pregnancy-parenting/parenting-babies-0-12-months/feeding-your-baby/baby-feeding-cues-video>



## Oral Health Tips

- Cleaning baby's mouth before the teeth appear is important. This can be done with a clean damp washcloth.
- Around 4-8 months the first teeth arrive. Usually the 2 bottom front teeth.
- Use a clean damp wash cloth or baby toothbrush/finger brush to clean these teeth twice a day.
- No toothpaste is needed at this stage.
- As the teeth come in, babies will tend to be grumpy due to the teething process.
- Many babies never use a pacifier. If you choose to give your baby one and it falls on the floor, the best way to clean it is to rinse it off with water. Do not lick the pacifier because this will transfer bacteria from your mouth to baby's. Also, please never dip your baby's pacifier in anything sweet.
- If you have chosen to give your baby a breastmilk substitute (formula), do not let the baby fall asleep while drinking it. The sugars can cause tooth decay when they are sleeping because there is less saliva in the mouth to rinse baby's teeth and gums.



# Keeping Baby Safe

## Using the Microwave

- Do not microwave breastmilk or breastmilk substitute (formula).
- Microwaves heat liquid unevenly causing hot spots which can burn your baby.
- Too much heat will also harm the antibodies in breast milk.
- Always serve breastmilk directly from the breast or warm it up in warm water. Be sure to check the temperature before feeding your baby.

## Protect Baby from Burns

- Babies have thin, sensitive skin that burns easily.
- Set the temperature of the hot water tank in your home to 49°C (120°F).
- Use lids on hot drinks and keep hot liquids away from the baby.
- Try to keep your baby out of the sun, especially between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. To play it safe, babies should play in the shade, and wear a hat and clothing that will protect their skin. Babies under 6 months of age are too young to wear sunscreen.

## Supervise To Keep Baby Safe

- At this stage, your baby is not able to do very much, but they are learning quickly. Now they have learned to move, kick, and wiggle.
- Keep one hand on your baby when they are on a high surface like a change table.
- A change pad on the floor is an option too.
- Before you answer the phone or door, put your baby in a crib or playpen, or take them with you.
- Don't leave your baby alone with family pets or small children.
- Always keep one hand on your baby while they are in the bath. To learn more about home safety visit [www.parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/home-safety](http://www.parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/home-safety)

## Coping with Crying

All babies cry and your baby is no different. Crying often peaks from 2-4 months of age. It is more important to stay calm than to stop your baby from crying. Plan for how you will cope when their crying gets to be too much. It is okay to ask for help. Never shake your baby for any reason. To learn more, visit [www.purplecrying.info](http://www.purplecrying.info)

# Taking Care of Yourself

Caring for a child is a special experience filled with many thoughts, feelings and expectations. Sometimes, however, we expect ourselves to be everything to everyone. You may not even realize that you've set this unconscious goal for yourself. If you are striving to be the "perfect" caregiver - **STOP!** Perfection is an impossible goal.

Here are some ways that you can help yourself:

- Accept offers of help from family, friends, and neighbours.
- Look at the way things are done in your family. What would make your daily routines run more smoothly?
- Share your thoughts and feelings.
- Plan family activities.

Pregnancy, the birth of a baby or an adoption brings physical, emotional and social changes. Adjusting to the new roles and relationships is not always easy. Some people are unaffected while for others, the severity of the mood disorder varies from the normal baby blues to the medical emergency called postpartum psychosis. Life with a new baby is stressful for partners and other family members as well. A postpartum mood disorder is a mental health disorder striking within the first year of giving birth.

Resources with more information about Post Partum Mood Disorders:

- [Managing Depression: A Self-help Skills Resource for Women Living With Depression During Pregnancy, After Delivery and Beyond](#)
- [Life with a new baby is not always what you Expect](#)
- For local resources: <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Mental-Health-Wellness>

# If I'm Supposed to Be Happy, Why Am I So Sad?

Do any of these statements sound familiar to you?

*"I feel tired all the time..."*

*"I find myself crying for no reason..."*

*"I'm confused and irritable..."*

*"I feel helpless and inadequate..."*

*"I find it hard to concentrate and make simple decisions..."*

*"I have trouble sleeping..."*

*"I have no appetite..."*

*"I'm overeating even when I'm not hungry..."*

*"I feel anxious and guilty..."*

*"I feel scared and panicky..."*

*"I don't have feelings for the baby..."*

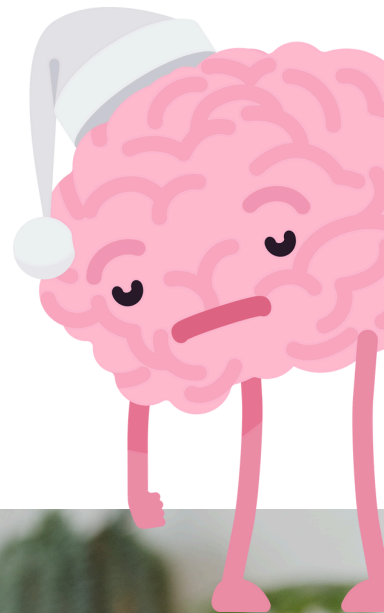
*"I'm afraid I might hurt my baby or myself..."*

A baby brings many changes to a family. New parents and caregivers often feel exhausted, irritable, and overwhelmed after the birth or adoption of a baby. These feelings are common, but it is important to discuss these feelings with someone you trust - your partner, a friend, or community supports. If you experience some of these feelings on a regular basis, for longer than 2 weeks, you may have postpartum depression. Keep talking with someone until you get the help and support you need.

To find out more about Postpartum Depression, MomsOverMatter (<https://momsovermatter.ca/>) website. Call your healthcare provider or Public Health for advice. Help is available.

## Changing Routines

A new baby will change your routine and your life. This is normal. Families need to remember that any time spent with the baby is a good investment. Take time to enjoy your baby. By now you have noticed that your time is no longer your own. It is still important to try to take time by yourself to relax. Try to take a nap or a long bath when your baby is napping. Try going for a walk outside together. You deserve it! When you take good care of yourself, you are better able to care for your baby. The other very important time, that often gets lost, is the time that you would spend with family and friends. Babies can fit well into most of your regular activities, and they would love to be included. If you have a partner or support person, take time to talk and listen to them throughout the day. Good communication is important for your relationships and for your baby.





## A Message for Partners

Isn't it amazing how one tiny little baby can change your whole life? Looking back you probably have some great memories of the past couple of months. You've changed diapers, rocked your baby, played with them and had some sleepless nights. Babies will wake during the night to feed for some time yet.

You've learned some things about your partner and yourself too! It's surprising what you can accomplish when you need to! You will start to feel comfortable and confident in your new role. Remember that the basis for all healthy development starts with tender love and care. Cuddle your baby skin-to-skin. Rock them gently. Sing softly. Close your eyes and let yourself get caught up in the magic. Feeding and keeping a baby warm and dry is important, but it is the love you share that will help your baby grow to be healthy and happy.

Visit *Dad Central*, a website all about fathering: [www.dadcentral.ca](http://www.dadcentral.ca). To find resources and information shared by a team of LGBTQ and ally researchers: *Queering Parenthood* at <http://queeringparenthood.com/communityresources.php>

## Love Shouldn't Hurt - Is Your Relationship Healthy?

Family violence is not an easy issue to talk about, but it is important to know that if you are being hurt, your kids will be hurt too. Children learn from what they see and hear. Their early experiences have a powerful impact on how they see their world, how they grow and who they will become. Children who are exposed to an abusive relationship between their parents or other caregivers feel scared, helpless, and unsafe. As they get older, they may find it harder to control their anger and get along with others. They are at higher risk of having a poor self-esteem, experiencing depression, and having trouble learning in school. As adults, they are more likely to be involved in violent relationships themselves. Protecting your children from violence now, can protect them from lifelong problems. Call 211 to learn about the services that are available in your community.



## Family Budgeting

By now your household spending has probably changed and you may be collecting parental benefits. Many families can find it challenging to balance their new budget. 211 is a three-digit phone number and website that provides information and referral to community and social services in Ontario. Visit [www.211Ontario.ca](http://www.211Ontario.ca) or call 211.

- For some budget and money-saving tips, visit the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/finance/manage.html>
- If you have questions about how parental benefits are taxed, contact Revenue Canada by calling 1-800-206-7218 and press "0" to speak with an agent. You will need your Social Insurance Number and your Employment Insurance access code when you call. For more information, visit [www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/maternity\\_parental.shtml#much](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/maternity_parental.shtml#much)
- Many communities have nutrition programs to help make fresh produce and other foods more affordable for everyone. Call your local health unit or 211 to find out what is available in your community.



## For more information

- The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides information and home visits to parents who are eligible and need more support during pregnancy, after their baby is born, and as their child grows. For more information or to self-refer to the program visit Grey Bruce Public Health's website at [Home Visiting Program \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](https://publichealthgreybruce.on.ca) or call Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 extension 5.
- 211 quickly and confidentially connects people to social services and community programs across Ontario. 211 is available by phone for those looking to speak to a friendly voice or by text, online search, email, or chat. Service is available in multiple languages.
- Call 811 to find health services or information or get health advice from a registered nurse. Toll free TTY line: 1-866-797-0007. Live chat is also available. Health811 - [Health811 \(ontario.ca\)](https://health811.onario.ca)
  - Looking for guidance about food and nutrition, including infant and child feeding? Residents of Ontario can connect with a Registered Dietitian to access free nutrition information and advice by calling 811 or starting a chat at Health811.
- Caring for Kids, a website developed by the Canadian Pediatric Society, provides parents with information about their child's health and well-being. [Home | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://caringforkids.cps.ca)
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. You can learn and play with your child, meet people and get advice from early childhood professionals.
  - Find an EarlyON child and family centre:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>
  - For more information about Grey County:  
<https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care/earlyon>
  - For more information about Bruce County:  
<https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>
- Discover how to prevent injuries before they happen – Parachute:  
[www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics](https://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics)
- For more information about many of these topics see Your Guide to Postpartum Health and Caring for Your Baby: [postpartum-health-guide.pdf \(canada.ca\)](https://www.postpartum-health-guide.pdf)
- OMama is a website and a mobile application (app) that connects you to trusted, evidence-informed pregnancy, birth, and early parenting information (focusing on resources in Ontario, Canada). [Home - OMama](https://www.omama.ca)
- La Leche League Canada: Breastfeeding support [www.lllc.ca](https://www.lllc.ca)
  - Transport Canada: [www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/kids](https://www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/kids)
- Health Canada Product Safety -  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/product-safety.html>

