

Parent Express

A GUIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY



TOPIC

One month old

Dear parent,

You and your baby are learning about each other.

During this first month, both you and your baby will spend time getting to know one another.

Most of your baby's time will be spent sleeping, crying, or eating. Most of your time will be spent figuring out the best way to meet your baby's needs.

Sometimes, you will feel tired and nervous, and you might lose your temper. Most parents feel like this at one time or another.

Don't worry; these feelings will pass with time.

What it's like to be 1 month old

How I grow

- I wobble my head if you don't support my neck.
- I turn my head sideways when I'm on my stomach.
- I roll partway from my back to my side.
- I keep my hands in a fist or slightly open most of the time.
- I root around and try to suck, even when I'm not feeding.



How I talk

- I'm beginning to make some throaty sounds.
- I cry when I'm hungry, wet, tired, or when I want to be held.

How I respond to things

- I make eye contact with you.
- I stare at things, but I don't grab for them yet.
- I don't show much expression on my face, but I will soon!
- I might smile when I see or hear you.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

- I get scared by loud noises, bright lights, or rough handling.

How I understand

- I prefer looking at patterns instead of solid colors.
- I know that I'm going to be fed at a certain time.

How I feel

- I feel comforted when you hold me close, smile, and talk gently to me. Don't be afraid of spoiling me.

Teenage parents: You are not alone

Many teenagers give birth, but the number of teenage births nationally fell in 2015 to the lowest level in U.S. history at 22.3 per 1,000 teen women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Kentucky teen birth rate remains the highest in the country at 51 per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19. As a younger parent, you might have some special concerns – living with your parents, being accepted by your friends, or finishing school. If you feel you need extra guidance or counseling, here are some places to get information:

- Your high school principal or counselor can tell you about programs designed especially to help you finish your education while taking care of your baby.
- Your local chapter of the American Red Cross has information and can refer you to other organizations in your community.

Keeping your baby's record

One way of checking on your baby's health is to keep a record. You can keep a small family health notebook in which you write down items such as height, weight, immunization schedule, how many teeth your baby has and when she got them, and your baby's blood type.

Write down dates of illnesses and briefly describe the symptoms. Your child's school will need a record of immunizations completed

by your child's doctor when he or she starts school. It also will be fun to look back through the book to see how your baby grew.

An accident can happen in any home

It is a good idea to keep handy the toll-free phone number of the Kentucky Regional Poison Center, (800) 222-1222. Your health-care provider can tell you what first-aid items and medications are useful to have in case of small accidents or mild illness and what you should do if something more serious occurs.

Your local chapter of the American Red Cross can advise you about first-aid kits for the home. In many areas, the Red Cross offers basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) courses.

Feeding your baby

All of your baby's food and nutrition needs for the next four months can be met with breast milk or iron-fortified formula.

By now, your baby probably has a fairly regular feeding pattern. She might get hungry from every two to every four hours.

Don't worry if your baby is a slow drinker or drinks less than you think she needs. If she doesn't want that last ounce of milk, don't force her. Overeating will only cause problems for your baby in later life.

Hold your baby close in the bend of your elbow while feeding. Remember that food and loving are both important. This is a time for getting to know each other – a time for snuggling, cuddling, and talking.

Hiccups are common, especially if your baby is bottle-fed. They might be caused by air bubbles your baby swallows from sucking hard on the bottle. Air bubbles can be painful. Burping your baby at least once during a feeding, and then again after the feeding, can help.

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If you breastfeed, you now need to eat about 500 extra calories a day. For example, two additional glasses of milk and a peanut butter sandwich gives you more than enough extra calories. Remember to drink plenty of liquids and to choose foods that are good sources of nutrients.

Bathing your baby

Bath time can be fun for you and your baby. Make it as easy and pleasant as possible so both of you will enjoy it.

Your baby will be ready for a bath as soon as his navel (belly button) and circumcision have healed. Until that time, wash your baby with a soft cloth dipped in a basin of warm water.

Some babies like to be bathed before the morning or evening feeding. Others might like their baths after meals. Choose a time to suit you and your baby.

Babies might cry when they have their first bath but, by the time they are about 6 weeks old, they usually like the feel of water.

A sponge bath

Make sure the room is warm (between 75 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit) and draft-free. Fill the tub or basin with warm water. Test the temperature with your elbow or wrist to make sure the water is not too hot. Don't put any softeners or bath lotions in the water, as they can cause a skin rash.

Wrap your baby loosely in a large towel. Keep his diaper on but not pinned. Sit next to the tub or basin of warm water with your baby in your lap. Have soap, a washcloth, and a soft drying towel nearby.

Gently wipe your baby's face and neck. Babies

don't usually like this, so get it over with quickly. About twice a week, wash his hair and scalp, rubbing your palms with soap and gently lathering his hair. To rinse, hold your baby's head and back over the basin with your hand and arm in a football-carry hold. Rinse thoroughly to make sure all the soap is gone. Pat his scalp dry. Avoid getting water in his eyes.

Now move to his chest, arms, and hands. After soaping and rinsing with the warm cloth, pat dry. Patting instead of rubbing with a towel is easier on

a baby's tender skin. Turn your baby on his stomach to wash his back. Then turn him on his back again. Take off his diaper and wash, rinse, and dry his stomach, bottom, legs, and feet.



A tub bath

Use a plastic tub filled with warm water and place it on a table or the sink counter. This is easier on your back than leaning over a regular-size bathtub. If you are using the kitchen sink, place a towel

in the sink as a cushion and turn the faucets away from your baby. Fill the tub or sink with warm water and test the temperature. Start out with just a few inches of water until you feel more comfortable. Hold your baby securely in the tub or sink by cradling him in one arm. Wash him the same way you would with a sponge bath.

Baby lotion or oil

If your baby's skin is dry, apply baby lotion. Put a little lotion on a cotton ball and gently wipe his skin. You also could try bathing him less often. Watch for a possible allergic skin reaction to a particular lotion or oil. Use only one product at a time until you are sure it is safe for your child's skin.

Fathers, if you haven't tried giving your baby a



bath yet, now is a good time to start. You can use bath time for sharing giggles, being close, and giving undivided attention to your little one.

Babies feel especially loved and loving when they are swept up in a big, fluffy towel with a cuddle thrown in before the dressing game starts.

The happy times shared with your baby during his bath go a long way.

A question about colic

My daughter has colic. After the 6 p.m. feeding, she starts to cry and won't stop. What can I do?

Some babies have crying attacks almost every evening, usually between 6 p.m. and midnight. They scream loudly, draw their legs up sharply, frown, and turn bright red. These attacks can last for hours and are a symptom of what doctors call colic, a name to explain any hard, continual crying in infants.

No one knows for sure what causes colic. Colicky babies are thought to have a lot of gas and cry because they are so uncomfortable. Some doctors believe that too much stimulation could cause colic. By the time a baby is 4 to 6 months old, daily colic attacks usually stop.

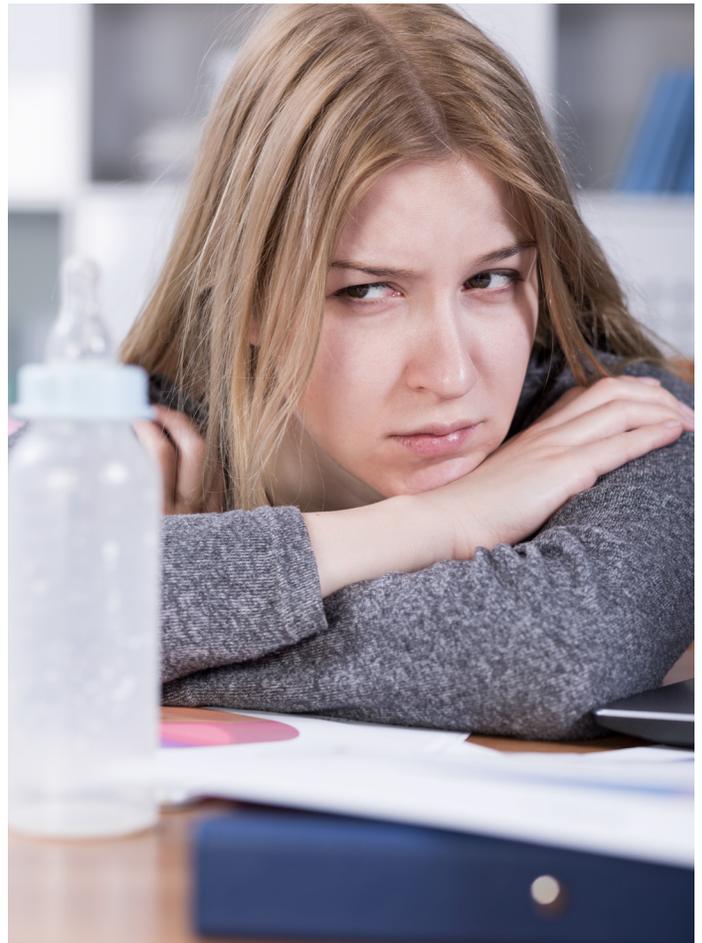
You cannot do much except comfort your baby until she stops crying. Sometimes it helps to hold her across your knees on her stomach and massage her back or rock her while constantly humming like a machine.

Listening to a colicky baby and not being able to help can be frustrating. But remember, it is not your baby's fault or your fault, and she will eventually get over it. If your baby continues to cry hard all day long and nothing seems to help, have her checked by a doctor or at a clinic. If you are breastfeeding, examine your diet for foods that might be irritating her digestion.

The baby blues

As a new mother, you might be going through what is known as the baby blues or the post-partum blues.

The baby blues come from the many changes your body goes through after your baby is born. You might be discouraged, tense,



or sad. Many new mothers feel this way.

Don't worry – these feelings are perfectly normal.

Some mothers worry that they look as if they are still pregnant. Don't be upset. It takes at least six weeks for the uterus (womb) to shrink back to normal size.

There are no strict rules about being a parent. If you are uncertain about what to do, trust your gut feelings.

Here are some ways to help you through these blue days:

- Talk with your partner, a family member, or a good friend about your feelings. It helps to talk with someone who is close to you.
- Find out if there are any parent groups in your community where parents get together to talk and work out solutions to common problems.
- Call the Comprehensive Care Center (check the internet for your local center), the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at the nearest school, the local



school district, or a religious group in your community for names of groups or for help in solving problems.

- Call the health department in your city or county and ask about the public health nurse visiting service. In many cases, this service is free.
- Ask a good friend or a relative to help you out once a month. She might be able to come in for a few hours to watch your baby while you take time to relax, go out, or just have some time for yourself.
- For information on Parents Anonymous groups and for general support and information on parenting, call Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky at 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-3736).



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