



# Welcome Words

## On Keeping Baby Healthy

**Hello New Parent!** We hope you will think of Welcome Baby Family Resource Center as your partner in parenting as you meet the wonder and challenges ahead. During the next twelve months, you will receive an edition of Welcome Words covering 6 special topics and including other resources you may find helpful. In addition to Welcome Words, Welcome Baby offers other services and classes that are described in our quarterly newsletter and website: [www.welcomebaby.org](http://www.welcomebaby.org). You are also invited to call us at 919-560-7341 if you have questions or concerns. Welcome Baby is a program of Durham County and Durham County Cooperative Extension. We receive support from Durham's Partnership for Children - a Smart Start Initiative and NCHHS-Department of Community Programs.

### WELL-CHILD CHECK-UPS—AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR CHILD'S GOOD HEALTH

We all think of going to the doctor when we are ill, but, for your infant and young child, a well-child visit, also, is a chance to raise questions and concerns about your child's development, behavior, and general well-being: questions that are difficult to spend time on during sick visits when your child may be crying or fatigued. Pediatricians are used to discussing common concerns with parents such as eating, sleeping, toilet training, social behaviors, as well as attention and learning problems. Having regular well-child visits with your child's doctor and raising the concerns that matter most to you are key ingredients in helping the doctor know you and your child, and in forming a reliable and trustworthy relationship.

#### HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY CHILD HAVE A WELL CHILD CHECK-UP?

- 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 18 months
- 2-20 years—Annual check-up recommended



#### A WELL CHILD CHECK-UP MAY INCLUDE:

- Height and weight check
- Developmental screening
- Vision and hearing screening
- Blood pressure
- Nutritional assessment
- Immunizations



#### IMMUNIZATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Immunizations (shots or vaccines) help protect your baby from some serious diseases. Getting the correct shot at the right time is key to protecting your child. Your pediatrician can guide you. It is important to remember that up-to-date vaccinations are required to get into kindergarten. Keep all of your baby's records in a folder or box in a safe place!

##### Common vaccines required:

- Hib
- DTap
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- MMR
- Chickenpox



##### Recommended:

- Rotavirus
- Pneumococcal
- Influenza

#### YOU AND YOUR PEDIATRICIAN—FORMING A PARTNERSHIP

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you have concerns about your baby's health.

- \* **Call first:** If your baby is not in immediate danger, check in with the advice nurse first. A phone call could save you the time and expense of an office visit.
- \* **Write down your questions** before your appointment and take notes. That way you'll get all the information you need.
- \* **Speak-up:** Provide additional information that you feel may be helpful. Remember you know your baby best.
- \* **Find a new medical provider** if you don't like your provider's style, if you feel like you aren't being listened to or if you disagree with your provider on important issues (i.e. immunizations or breastfeeding).

## BABY'S FIRST TEETH

Your baby's first tooth probably won't appear until she's 7 months old, but some babies get a tooth as early as 3 months. Others are more than a year old before this first tooth, usually one of the lower front teeth, comes in. Long before that tooth erupts, however, you may notice lots of drooling.

A skin rash or chapping may show up around the chin and mouth from all that saliva. The best thing to do is gently wipe the drool away and use a bib (or towel under the crib sheet) to help absorb some of the flood.

Once the tooth is about to erupt, your baby's gum can become very red and sore. Nursing may make the pain worse because the suction increases pressure and pain in the gum. Babies often reject the breast or bottle, because of this discomfort.

While teething, your baby is likely to be irritable, sleep poorly, and may have diarrhea and/or a low-grade fever. Some doctors believe all the excess saliva loosens the stool and that gum inflammation causes a low fever. Here are some tips that may make your baby more comfortable:

- Give her a frozen banana or bagel to suck on or a clean washcloth around an ice cube to gnaw on.
- Try rubbing her gum firmly with your finger. Sometimes the counter pressure helps.
- If she's eating fruits, try chilling the pureed fruit in the freezer.
- A bottle with ice water or very cold apple juice may help.
- Or, try blending a cube of frozen apple juice in the blender and feeding it with a spoon.

If your baby has diarrhea for more than two bowel movements, or a low-grade fever (under 101° Fahrenheit rectally) for three days, call the doctor. Treat the fever and pain with acetaminophen (ask the doctor for the correct dose). Don't rub anything on her gums without the doctor's approval, particularly anything containing alcohol (a dangerous poison for infants). If you use Orajel, be sure it is Baby Orajel.



## WHEN CALLING THE DOCTOR IS A MUST

- Baby's rectal temperature is higher than 100 degrees F. on two separate readings (and she's not overly bundled up).
- There is forceful vomiting (shooting out rather than dribbling); or vomiting occurring with diarrhea and/or fever.
- There is a significant change in bowel habits.
- You see pus or red skin around the base of the umbilical cord, or if she cries when you touch this area (except for crying when you apply alcohol, which is cold).
- When nursing and your baby is consistently getting less than 8 feedings in a 24-hour period.
- You hear unfamiliar crying — which sounds like shrieks of pain, or crying that persists for an unusual length of time.
- There's a change in skin color: if baby's skin overall looks persistently blue when calm (more than just hands and feet).
- There is persistent coughing (or choking during feedings).
- There is difficulty breathing (more than 60 breaths in a minute, flaring of the nose, grunting or blue coloring).
- Baby seems loose in the limbs or floppy, or seems rigid.

**Never hesitate to call your child's doctor, who expects lots of calls from the parents of infants.  
He or she wants to hear from you.**