

Provided by the WIC Program and First 5 LA

In a few weeks, you will have a new baby!

You may feel excited and a little worried. Many parents spend the last few weeks preparing for their baby and getting chores done that will be difficult to do after their baby arrives. Remember, your rest is also important.

Before your baby is born...

- Your baby hears sounds and your voice.
- Your baby can tell light from dark.
- Your baby enjoys your gentle touch.



Hold your baby a lot! Babies love to be held and cuddled. This helps them bond with you and helps them grow. Ask the hospital to allow you to hold your baby skin to skin for the first hour after birth.

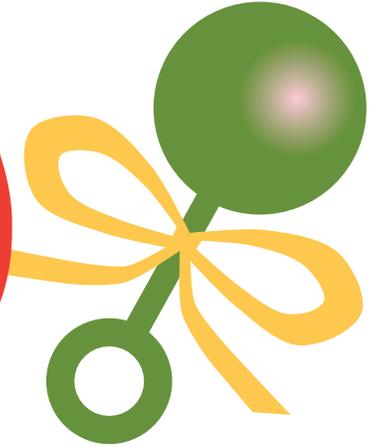


QUESTION: What is my baby like?

ANSWER: During your visits to the doctor, you have already learned about your growing baby. You may have seen your ultrasound, and may even know if your baby is a boy or a girl. From the ultrasound, you may have seen your baby's legs, arms, fingers, toes, heart, and even its brain!

Try this!

Before your baby is born, he or she likes to hear talking and singing. Play soft music and talk to your baby. Your baby's father, brothers or sisters, grandparents and other people in your family can talk to the baby too.



QUESTION: Can my baby HEAR before birth?

ANSWER: Yes! Your baby starts listening to you during the sixth month of your pregnancy. Your baby learns your voice by hearing you talk. If your baby hears Daddy's or big brother's voice, he or she can learn to recognize that as well. Hearing your familiar voice after he or she is born will be comforting.

Your baby is also listening to your heartbeat, and the other sounds inside your body. He or she hears your stomach growl. If you shake a rattle near your stomach, your baby may turn toward it. You cannot see this, but doctors have seen it with an ultrasound.

Loud noises can frighten your baby, even before he or she is born. If a buzzer goes off near you, or there is loud music, you may feel your baby jump in surprise. It is best for your baby to hear peaceful, soft sounds. This way your baby learns that the world is a safe place.

Mom!



QUESTION: Can my baby SEE before birth?

ANSWER: Yes! Even before your baby is born, he or she can see. Of course, there is not much for your baby to see before birth, but babies recognize the difference between dark and light. Your baby will turn toward a flashlight shined against your stomach! And, just like with sound, too much light is unpleasant and your baby will turn away from a very bright beam of light shined against your stomach. You cannot see this, but doctors have seen it with an ultrasound.

Try this!

What is it?

Gently explore your baby's shape. Feel your tummy and try to guess whether you are touching your baby's hand, foot, bottom, or head.



QUESTION: Can my baby FEEL before birth?

ANSWER: Yes! When you dance, and when you stroke your tummy, your baby feels it. Pat and stroke your tummy gently. Your baby will enjoy it.



QUESTION: Sometimes my baby kicks me a lot. Sometimes, not at all. Why?

ANSWER: This is normal. Even before they are born, babies have times when they are very active. At other times they are asleep or quiet. You may notice a pattern. Often babies become very active when their mothers are trying to get to sleep. In fact, your baby has been exploring, feeling the umbilical cord and the walls of your womb for several months already. Your baby may even be finding and sucking a thumb while still inside of you!

Two ways to help your baby get the healthiest start:



1 Breastfeed your baby as soon after birth as you can.

Your baby is alert during the first hour after birth. This is the ideal time to breastfeed. Then breastfeed as often as possible.

Breastfeeding also helps you bond with your baby. When you breastfeed, your baby experiences skin-to-skin contact that helps with bonding. Formula-fed babies need just as much cuddling as breastfed babies. When you feed your baby, your face is about 8-10 inches from your baby's face. Guess what? Your newborn baby sees most clearly about 8-10 inches from his or her face!

2 Read to your baby.

Now that your baby is able to hear your voice, what better way to introduce yourself than by sharing a favorite book? Read, talk and sing to your baby.



Safety Corner



Baby's first ride home

The car seat is one of the most important items you will use. A few tips to keep in mind:

- Be careful to properly install the car seat.
- Infants should always be placed in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of the car.
- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- Pay attention to the height and weight limits of a seat before you buy it.

First 5 LA

First 5 LA is a child advocacy and grant making organization created by California voters to invest Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues in programs for improving the lives of children from prenatal through age 5 in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA champions health, education and safety causes concerning young children and families. For more information, please visit www.first5la.org.

The WIC Program

WIC provides nutrition and health education services, breastfeeding support, referrals to community agencies and healthy food to eligible women, infants and children under age five. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For more information, please visit www.wicworks.ca.gov.