

## What's Up? Your Baby's Development

# 2-Month Visit



Babies are starting to develop better control of their bodies, which helps them explore in new ways. They use their eyes, ears, hands, and mouths to explore objects and figure out how things work. They use their sounds and body movements to let you know what they are thinking and feeling. *What messages does your baby send to you?*

### 2–4 Months: What's on Your Mind

#### My 2-month-old seems to really dislike tummy time. I've heard it's important. What should I do?

Some babies like time on their tummies more than others. Since it is recommended that all babies sleep on their backs, it is important for them to have regular play time on their bellies across the day. Tummy time allows them to build strength and coordination in their arms, legs, back, and stomach that will help them learn to crawl later on. Being on their tummies also gives babies a break from being in the same position. Some babies don't like tummy time and, while it's important to do it several times each day, it doesn't have to be for long periods of time. Even a few minutes a few times a day is helpful. To make it more fun, you can lie on your stomach in front of your baby, or put a toy or stuffed animal where he can see it and reach for it. When your baby starts to fuss, simply roll him over or pick him and try again later!

#### What Your Baby Can Do

##### I am learning how to "tell" you what I need.

- I can use my sounds, facial expressions, and body movements to tell you how I'm feeling—sleepy, hungry, happy, or uncomfortable.
- I show you when I want to play and when I need a break.

##### I am beginning to use my body to make things happen.

- I can grip objects with my hands. By 3 months old, I will reach for and grasp objects with both hands.
- When I am hungry, I might move my head so that my mouth is close to my mother's breast.

##### We are becoming closer and closer everyday.

- I am learning to trust that you will read and respond to my signals.
- I rely on you to comfort me. This helps me learn to comfort myself.

#### What You Can Do

**Watch your baby to learn her signals.** Does she have a "hunger" cry? Does she rub her eyes or look away from you when she is tired? Smiles are easy to figure out.

**Respond to your baby's signals.** When her eyes are bright and she is awake and alert, it is time to play. Slow things down when she cries, turns away, or arches her back.

**Give your baby something to reach for and hold on to—a finger or toy.** Let him touch objects with different textures and shapes. Hold a toy within your child's reach so he can swat it with his hands or feet.

**Watch to see how your baby is "discovering" his body.** Does he look at his hands, suck on his feet, or try to roll?

**Comfort your baby whenever she cries.** You can't spoil a baby. Soothing makes her feel safe, secure, and loved.

**Help your baby calm herself** by guiding her fingers to her mouth, giving her a pacifier (if appropriate), or offering her a blanket or soft object that is special to her.

*As you use the HealthySteps handouts, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated and still be growing just fine. Every child develops at her own pace—and your HealthySteps Specialist will be available to answer any questions you may have. Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.*



## Spotlight on Responding to Your Baby

As babies grow, they get better at communicating with parents and other caregivers by using facial expressions (including smiles or frowns), gestures (such as arching their backs when they're overwhelmed), and sounds. Learning how to "read" your baby helps you understand her likes, dislikes, needs, and wants. It is also helps babies feel they are good communicators, which motivates them to keep working on expressing themselves. These nonverbal cues are "baby steps" toward the language skills that babies will develop later, in their second year.

### Did you know...

Even at this young age, your baby is picking up on how you are feeling. Because of this, it is very important to be aware of your emotions.



#### What It Means for You:

Keep in mind that understanding how another person is feeling is a very important skill for building healthy relationships. You help your baby learn to be sensitive to others by being sensitive to him. Respond to his signals. Soothe him when he cries. Smile and laugh with him when he is happy. These are all vital parts of responsive caregiving.

*What are some things you can do to relax and calm yourself after a tough day? Taking care of yourself is one of the most important ways you take good care of your baby.*

#### What You Can Do:

- **Watch your baby to learn how he communicates.** How does he act when he is tired or hungry? How does your child respond to stimulation such as lights, sound, and lots of people or activity? How does your baby show happiness or tell you he is enjoying an activity?
- **Look for patterns.** When does your baby usually get hungry or tired? When is she usually ready to play? If you find patterns in your baby's sleep and activity levels, you can schedule activities—such as doctor's appointments or trips to the mall—when she is at her best.
- **Follow your baby's lead.** When your baby shows interest in an object—looks at it or reaches for it—let him touch it (if it's safe, of course.) If your child turns away, closes his eyes, or begins to fuss, take a break from play and let him rest. Responding to your baby's signals lets him know his feelings are important and builds his trust in you.
- **Think trial-and-error.** It can take time to figure out the meaning of your baby's signals. She cries. You think she is hungry. You offer her some cereal and she pushes it away, so you take the bowl away. She starts to cry and reaches out for the bowl. Finally you figure out that what she wants is to feed herself. As you work on reading your baby's signals, remember that what's most important is that you don't give up.

*At this visit the pediatric team will measure your baby's length, weight, and head. They'll listen to your baby's heart and look at his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your baby will receive any needed immunizations. We will talk about your baby's development and routines like sleeping and eating. We'll also review safety guidelines. And, of course, we'll make time to discuss any questions or concerns you might have!*