

**Congratulations on your new baby!**

This is a very special time for you and your family. Parenting is very rewarding but isn't always easy. The Department of Health wants to make sure you and your baby have the best start possible. The department will mail you up-to-date health, safety, development, and other parenting information every few months until your child turns six. The mailings are known as Child Profile Health Promotion mailings. The department, along with health and safety experts, regularly creates and updates the information in the mailings. WithinReach is a partner of the Department of Health. Its Family Health Hotline can help you with parenting, health, and development concerns. Call them at 1-800-322-2588.

**Your baby's checkups are important**

Regular visits to the doctor help keep your baby healthy and you informed. Your baby needs regular checkups during the first year. The next one will be when he or she is about two months old. Checkups are a good time to ask questions about vaccines, feeding, sleep, vision, development, and baby care.



Bring your baby's Lifetime Immunization Record and Childhood Health Record to every visit. Your first Child Profile mailing included these records. If you didn't get them or need more copies, call the Family Health Hotline.

It's important to find hearing problems early. Check with your baby's doctor if you're not sure he or she was screened at birth. Go to [www.doh.wa.gov/earlyhearingloss](http://www.doh.wa.gov/earlyhearingloss) for information about newborn hearing screening. It's also important to get your baby's vision checked. Talk to your doctor about vision screening at every visit.

**Babies need immunizations**

Vaccines help protect your baby from serious, sometimes deadly diseases. At two months, your baby will likely get these vaccines:

- Hepatitis B (HepB): this may be your baby's second dose if he or she received the birth dose before leaving the hospital
- Rotavirus (RV)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)

Before your baby is immunized, you'll get a Vaccine Information Statement that describes the vaccine, the disease it prevents, and any possible vaccine side effects. Record all vaccines in your baby's Lifetime Immunization Record. Also, check with your doctor to make sure your baby's immunizations are in the Washington State Immunization Information System. It helps healthcare providers keep track of immunization records and makes sure records are complete if you change providers and when your child starts child care, school, and camp.

**Pertussis (whooping cough) is serious for babies**

More than half of all babies under one who get whooping cough must be hospitalized. Nine out of ten whooping cough deaths occur in babies under six months. Whooping cough is a respiratory illness that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing, and talking. It may cause coughing spells in older children and adults. Babies with whooping cough often can't cough and have problems feeding and may stop breathing and turn blue at times. Whooping cough may cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death in babies.

Most babies with whooping cough get it from their parents, siblings, grandparents, or other caregivers who have the disease but may not know it. A mother who gets Tdap vaccine during the third trimester of pregnancy gives direct protection to her baby for the first few weeks of life. Make sure your baby gets five doses of DTaP vaccine on time for continued protection against whooping cough. For added protection:

- Keep your baby away from anyone with a cough, cold, or signs of illness.
- Surround your baby with a "cocoon" of protection. Make sure everyone in close contact with your baby is up-to-date with their whooping cough vaccine. Adults and adolescents need Tdap vaccine. Children under eight need DTaP vaccine.

Visit [www.doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough](http://www.doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough) for more information.

**Other ways to keep your baby healthy**

If you breastfeed, continue. Breastfeeding strengthens your baby's ability to fight infection and mild illness. If you have questions about breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

Wash your hands well and often with soap and water, especially after changing your baby's diaper and before you feed him or her. Be sure everyone who cares for your baby washes their hands often, too.

Keep your baby away from people with coughs, colds, or signs of illness. Keep your baby at home when he or she has a fever, isn't eating or sleeping well, is vomiting, or has diarrhea.

**Babies begin learning as soon as they are born**

You help your baby's brain develop when you give him or her lots of attention. Hold your baby, rock him or her gently in your arms, cuddle, and play with your baby. Look into his or her eyes and talk softly. Pick your baby up when he or she cries. This teaches your baby to trust that you will care for him or her. You won't spoil your baby when you hold him or her and respond to crying.

# Keeping Your Baby Healthy and Safe

## Searching for infant child care

If you plan to return to work or school, start looking for child care now. Look for people who enjoy caring for babies and have training in infant care. Ask friends about the child care they have used. Visit a few places before you decide. If you breastfeed, ask how the child care provider supports it. Try to visit your first choice several times.

For help finding child care, go to: [www.childcarenet.org](http://www.childcarenet.org).  
ChildCare Aware of Washington

## Breastfeeding at work or school

New laws protect moms' right to express breastmilk at work. Learn more about your rights and find other helpful information at [www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Breastfeeding](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Breastfeeding). Talk to your boss or school staff now to make a breastfeeding plan. Here are some things to consider before you go back to work or school:

- Find out if your medical coverage or your employer provides breast pumps and other breastfeeding help.
- Ask your boss, school staff, or human resources department where you can pump. Be sure the room is private and has electricity.
- Make a plan to store your milk.
- Talk to your child care provider about how they support breastfeeding. Ask if they know how to handle breastmilk and if moms are welcome to nurse on site.

## Mom: Take care of yourself, too

You and your family are your child's first and most important teachers. Learn how to take care of yourself so you can take care of your child. Here are some tips:

- Go to your six-week checkup. This may be earlier if you had a C-section.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about the best birth control options for you. Use birth control every time you have sex after giving birth, even if you breastfeed.
- Sleep when your baby sleeps. Take a little time for yourself when you feel overwhelmed.
- Keep up-to-date with your immunizations, including getting Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy and a yearly flu shot.

## Recognize postpartum depression

Many women feel emotional ups and downs in the first few weeks after giving birth. If you continue to feel sad, very irritable, uninterested in your baby or the world around you, or have trouble concentrating or thinking clearly, talk to your doctor or call Perinatal Support of Washington at 1-888-404-7763.

## Baby's skin burns easily—treat it with care!

Your baby's skin burns easier than yours. Hot liquids cause many scald burns. Here are some tips to help avoid burns:

- Turn down your water heater thermostat to 120°.
- Test the bath water with your elbow to make sure it's lukewarm, not hot.
- Don't drink hot liquids, such as coffee or tea, while your baby is in your arms or lap.
- Heat bottles in a pan of hot water, not a microwave. Check the temperature on your inner wrist.

For more information on how to prevent scalds and burns, visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/medical-conditions/symptom-index/burns/](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/medical-conditions/symptom-index/burns/).

## Reduce the risk of your baby dying during sleep

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is when a baby who seems healthy dies in his or her sleep. There is no warning and often we don't know why the baby died. Sometimes babies die from accidental suffocation or smothering while they sleep. Create a safe sleeping place for your baby to reduce the risk of SIDS and accidental suffocation. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following steps to create a safe sleep zone for your baby:

- Place your baby on his or her back to sleep at night and for naps. Give your baby "tummy time" when awake and watched by an adult.
- Keep your baby warm but not hot. Dress him or her warm enough to sleep without covers. A light sleep sack works great.
- Baby's bed should be a firm crib mattress and fitted sheet. Keep blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the crib.
- Never put your baby on a water bed, heated bed, or a mattress that doesn't fit the bed.
- No one should smoke or vape around your baby. The risk of SIDS is higher for babies whose mothers smoked while pregnant. Babies exposed to cigarette or e-cigarette smoke may also be at higher risk of SIDS. For help quitting smoking, call 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT-NOW) or visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).
- Breastfeeding may reduce your baby's risk of SIDS.

The AAP and the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission warn that infants should NOT sleep with their parents. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib or bassinet next to your bed. Adult beds are not made for infant safety. Sharing a room with your baby is safer than sharing a bed.

Tell everyone who cares for your baby about safe sleep. Call the Northwest Infant Survival & SIDS Alliance at 1-800-533-0376 or visit [www.nwsids.org](http://www.nwsids.org) for information and resources.

## Buckle up your baby on every ride

Make sure your baby is always buckled up safely in the back seat of your vehicle. Here are some tips to make sure your baby is buckled up safely:

- Buckle your baby correctly into a car seat on every ride. Follow the car seat directions and read the vehicle owner's manual.
- Make sure the car seat faces the rear of the vehicle.
- Turn off the airbag if you must place your baby in the front seat. Never place your baby in the front seat if the vehicle has a passenger air bag that is not turned off. If the air bag inflates, it could kill or seriously injure your baby.

If you have an old or used car seat, there may be hidden dangers. Contact The Safety Restraint Coalition for tips on choosing a safe car seat and to find out about recalls.

Contact **The Safety Restraint Coalition** at  
1-800-BUCK-L-UP  
or visit [www.800buckleup.org](http://www.800buckleup.org) for more information.

