

# Sunshine's 2 month visit



It is a good day to bring some immunity into your baby against some old but devastating diseases (which will come back if we stop using our vaccines against them). The tears will dry and the leg should not hurt this time, as baby will not yet have much immunity yet to react to the shots.

Hopefully baby is finding a schedule that is mutually agreeable. If not, we can talk about that. Every person is unique, and some personalities require more persuasion to adjust to the family. Letting a baby fall asleep alone in the crib once you see they are tired is important. Sometimes parents forget this and always have baby fall asleep in their arms, which is cute but deprives the baby of gaining confidence in falling asleep alone.

Mothers can develop post partum depression up to 6 months after baby is born, so if you are feeling blue, talk about it. Strong chemicals bring a baby to life and your body may be responding. Grandparents are often most willing to give you an evening off, if that is appropriate, discuss it and consider enjoying a few hours out with your spouse.

Feeding can start to include some solids anywhere from 3-9 months of age, though everyone is a little different. Usually I start that at regular meal times. Textures want to be played with (even in the mouth) before good coordinated swallowing occurs, so be sure to check that items are not staying in the mouth or becoming a choking risk. Sloppy swallowing of rice cereal, then oatmeal, then other grains is usually followed by vegetables then fruits. Start a new food no sooner than 3 days after the last new food in case one is not tolerated. New research is showing less allergies when babies get exposed to all sorts of foods early in life. I worry about processed foods due to the heat used to make them and other chemicals in them. That issue is poorly studied, but raw or minimally processed food is the safest in my opinion. Whenever possible I give the most basic of foods, canned baby foods with only a few ingredients on the label, a piece of a cooked bean or pea, or pasta.

Fluoride is important for development of strong teeth and bones. If you have well water, test it for fluoride (all city water already has adequate fluoride). Vitamin D is adequately produced in our skin with just a little sunshine exposure so be sure you get outside regularly. If you are still nursing be sure to get sufficient vitamin C (in fruit, onions, peppers). Store up some breast milk but do NOT prop the bottle unattended in baby's mouth, this can lead to dangerous choking. Do NOT feel guilty if you are using some formula... it is so close to breast milk now. If you need to return to work soon you may find that breast-feeding in the morning and evening is still feasible. Some workplaces allow you to pump breast milk in a private room if your body is not cooperating right away.

Baby's bowel movements will change with different foods. Be aware of what helps and what hinders your baby's bowel movements (or is unpleasant!). I found white grape is less messy than prune juice! Do not ever stick anything up your baby's anus (really nobody does rectal temperatures any more). Your baby even at a very young age will realize pooping is their duty; no one can do it for them. Some babies fuss quite a bit even while just passing gas... that usually resolves itself in a couple of decades.

Most babies will get their first illness soon. It is typically just viruses that visit your household. Fortunately most of them come and go with no fanfare in a few days. Babies have a harder time clearing nasal mucus and may need extra humidity, nose drops, a bulb syringe or a trip to the shower in dad's arms in the middle of the night. Most of the time they will not need antibiotics. But if there is hard wheezing or baby is not eating or acting "out of it" or just "not right" please come in or even go to the emergency room.

No over the counter medications should be given to baby yet. Acetaminophen is perhaps an exception, as a half dropper (0.4 ml) may help baby feel more comfortable or bring down a mild fever. A warm bath will cool baby down as well. There is no need to make the bath lukewarm, since putting baby in a bath will send the heat of baby into the water and as the water cools down your baby will cool down as well. If baby is shivering in the tub warm the water up a bit. If you are worried how baby is doing just have us take a look.

Babies still need to sleep on their backs. Remind grandma who didn't have to do that for you. We now save 1/2 of the kids who used to die of suffocation "crib death" by keeping them on their back till they can roll both ways by themselves. Don't forget to remove stuffed toys at bedtime as well. Just while you are present and paying attention should you be giving baby tummy time to build up the core and muscles of the neck. Tummy time builds core strength, strengthens different muscles and helps baby move side to side and from side to back.

Sleeping through the night should be happening with maybe one good feed in the middle of the night. If your baby is having trouble, consider a few things. Maybe baby should be kept awake more in the day, a little more stimulation, reading books, walks outside, tummy time and other?? The nighttime should have a definite routine. The baby should anticipate bedtime through your actions. Certain activities stimulate your baby; you will learn what they are. Getting mad of course never works, and if you need help, call us!!

When babies are sick some observations we might make are: is baby screaming, rolling their head, pulling up their legs, crying with your touch or crying differently. Is the breathing fast or slow, are the lips blue, is baby wheezing or coughing all the time. Is the skin flushed, sweaty, pale or with a rash. Are the bowels slimy or watery or very hard. Is baby too quiet or fussy or is there a change in eating or sleeping habits.

Safety issues. Keep clean air in the home, get fresh air daily, don't smoke around baby, don't use a baby walker and make sure your hot water can't go above 125 degrees Fahrenheit. Car seats need to be used 100% of the time!! Some irregularities of heads at this age are common due to keeping kids on their backs, you can minimize this by putting baby slightly off to one side or another by how you swaddle them and lie them down.

Exercises for the baby are stretches, massages, putting all the extremities through the range of natural movements. Holding baby up to "walk" is fun, and don't forget to let baby explore different textures. Start early and enjoy watching their reactions!! Expect baby's head to still be wobbly (support it), expect to see tears with crying, see arms and legs move in bicycle fashion when excited, expect to see some cooing noises. Talk in normal voice to your baby, there is a lot of early learning going on! Foreign sounds can be learned now too.

A healthy harmonious home makes for emotionally secure and healthy babies. Take time to make your relationships and emotions strong. Many will watch a baby at this age, so find someone you trust and give yourself a break now and then. Others (with the need to return to work) crave more time with baby, and will get more bonding time by using a baby carrier or even just a scarf to swaddle baby onto your chest or back while doing more mundane chores. Baby just enjoys being with you so spoil both of you with together time. Eat well, get plenty of rest, and if need be, ask for help from a mom's group, a pastor or counselor.

The next visit is at 4 months of age and at that time we will check to see how growth and development is going. We don't like to focus too heavily on meeting a milestone at a perfect age, as babies all have a slightly unique path to develop. We will discuss if we have concerns at your checkup and please bring up yours as well.



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