

In this letter you'll find helpful resources and learn about:

- When to schedule your baby's next well-child visit.
- The vaccines your newborn will need and how they protect them from serious diseases.
- How to protect your baby from whooping cough.
- Human milk and formula.
- Interacting with your baby to help them learn.

- How to find quality child care.
- How to take care of yourself so you can take care of your baby.
- Recognizing postpartum depression.
- How to protect your baby from scald and burns.
- Reducing your baby's risk of SIDS.
- Car safety.

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

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 their first year. The next visit will be when your baby is about 2 months old.

Checkups are a good time to ask questions about vaccines, feeding, sleep, growth and development, and your baby's care.

It's also important to get your baby's vision and hearing checked. Talk to your baby's doctor or nurse about vision screening at every visit. Was your baby's hearing screened at birth? Check with your baby's doctor if you are not sure. It's important to find hearing problems early. For information on newborn hearing screening go to doh.wa.gov/EarlyHearingLoss.

If you need information on how to find affordable health insurance, call the Help Me Grow Washington Hotline at **1-800-322-2588** or visit ParentHelp123.org.



Regular checkups will keep you informed about my health.

Vaccines

Babies need vaccines.

Vaccines help protect your baby from serious, sometimes deadly diseases. At 2 months, your baby should get these recommended vaccines:

- Hepatitis B (HepB)
- Rotavirus (RV)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)

Before your baby is vaccinated, you'll get a Vaccine Information Statement that describes the vaccine, the disease it prevents, and possible vaccine side effects.

Check with your baby's doctor or nurse to make sure their vaccines are in the Washington State Immunization Information System (WAIS). WAIS helps health care providers keep track of vaccine records. It also makes sure records are complete in case you change doctors and when your child starts child care, preschool, school, or camp. You have the right to review your child's records, ask questions, and make corrections. Talk with your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions.

If your baby's vaccine records are in the WAIS, you can sign up to see and download them on myirmobile.com.

Pertussis (whooping cough) is serious for babies.

About half of all babies under 1 year who get whooping cough must be hospitalized. Nine out of ten whooping cough deaths occur in babies under 6 months. Most babies with whooping cough get it from their parents, siblings, grandparents, or other caregivers who have the disease but may not know it.

Whooping cough is a respiratory illness that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing, and talking. It can cause coughing spells in older children and adults. Babies with whooping cough often can't cough and have problems breathing or feeding. Whooping cough may also cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death in babies.

All pregnant people should get Tdap vaccine early during the third trimester of their pregnancy to protect the baby for the first few months of life before they can get vaccinated.

Here are some tips for added protection:

- Make sure your baby gets 5 doses of DTaP vaccine between 2 months of age and 5 years of age on time for continued protection against whooping cough.
- Keep your baby away from anyone with a cough, cold, or signs of illness.
- Make sure everyone in close contact with your baby is up to date with their whooping cough vaccine (Tdap). Everyone seven years and older needs a dose of Tdap vaccine.

For more information, visit doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Feeding your baby

How you feed your baby is a personal choice. Breast or chest feeding is a powerful way to keep the immune system strong and this helps fight infection and mild illness. If you breast or chest feed, keep up the great work. Your baby only needs human milk at this time. If you have questions about breast or chest feeding, talk to your doctor, WIC or call the Help Me Grow Washington Hotline at **1-800-322-2588** (711 TTY relay).

If you are using formula, follow the directions on the container or ask your provider about proper mixing and storage. Human milk, formula, or a combination provides all the nutrition a baby needs at this age. Wash your hands with soap and water before feeding your baby and after changing their diaper. Ask everyone who cares for your baby to do the same.

Growth and Development

Babies begin learning as soon as they are born.

You help your baby's brain develop when you give them lots of attention. For more information on how to help your baby learn and grow, see the "**Watch and Help Me Grow, Birth to 18 Months**" brochure in this mailing.

Child Care and School Readiness

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 child care they have used.

Visit a few places before you decide. If you breast or chest feed, ask how the child care provider supports it. Try to visit your first choice several times. For information about finding child care, go to dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care.

Family Support and Routines

Feeding your baby at work or school

Washington law protects a parent's right to breast or chest feed or express their milk in public. To learn more about these rights and to find other helpful information, see the "Feeding Your Baby, Birth to 6 Months" brochure in this mailing.

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 6 week, post-pregnancy 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 breast or chest feed.
- Take a daily multivitamin that has folic acid.
- Sleep when your baby sleeps. Take a little time for yourself when you feel overwhelmed.
- Keep up to date with your vaccines, including the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy and a yearly flu shot.

Recognizing postpartum depression

You may feel emotional ups and downs in the first few weeks after giving birth. Postpartum depression can start anytime during the first year after the birth of your baby. 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, call Perinatal Support Washington warm line at **1-888-404-7763** or go to perinatalsupport.org.

Safety

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

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

- Turn down your water heater thermostat to 120°F.
- 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.

Learn how to prevent scalds and burns at bit.ly/burn-prevention.

Keep your baby safe while asleep.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old. 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 sleep space for your baby to reduce the risk of SIDS and accidental suffocation.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following tips to create a safe sleep zone for your baby:

- Place your baby on their back to sleep at night and for naps. Stop swaddling when your baby is old enough to try rolling over.
- Give your baby "tummy time" when awake and watched by an adult.
- Keep your baby warm but not hot. Dress them warm enough to sleep without covers. A light sleep sack works great.
- Keep blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the crib. Your baby's bed should be a firm crib mattress and fitted sheet.

- Never put your baby on a waterbed, heated bed, air mattress, or a mattress that doesn't fit the bed.
- Don't allow people to smoke or vape around your baby. The risk of SIDS is higher for babies whose parent smoked while pregnant. Babies exposed to cigarette or e-cigarette smoke may also be at higher risk of SIDS. For help to quit smoking, call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669) or visit quitline.com.
- Breast or chest feed to help reduce your baby's risk of SIDS.

The AAP and the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends keeping your baby's sleep area in your bedroom for at least the first 6 months. Place your baby's crib, bassinet, or portable crib close to your bed. Babies should NOT sleep in your bed. Tell everyone who cares for your baby about safe sleep. To learn more, visit bit.ly/keepyoursleepingbabysafe.

Buckle up your baby on every ride.

Make sure your baby is always buckled up safely in the backseat of your vehicle. A baby riding in the front seat can be fatally injured by a passenger-side air bag. If you must place your baby in the front seat, only do so with the air bag turned off. Make sure the car seat faces the rear of the vehicle until at least age two or until your child is too heavy or too tall based on the manufacturer's instructions. Follow the car seat directions and read the vehicle owner's manual.

If you have an old or used car seat, there may be hidden dangers. If you have questions or to find the nearest car seat inspection service visit wacarseats.com.



Make sure I am buckled up correctly in my car seat.

Resources

- **Newborn hearing screening:** doh.wa.gov/EarlyHearingLoss
- **Order immunization materials:** 1-800-322-2588 or immunematerials@doh.wa.gov
- **Affordable health insurance:** 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or ParentHelp123.org
- **Online vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Whooping cough information:** doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough
- **Breast and chest feeding questions:** 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or ParentHelp123.org
- **Find child care:** dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care
- **Perinatal Support Washington:** 1-888-404-7763 and perinatalsupport.org
- **Burn prevention:** bit.ly/burn-prevention
- **Tobacco Quitline:** 1-800-784-8669 and quitline.com
- **Car seat safety:** wacarseats.com

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your baby is 3 months old with information on how to:

- Prepare for your baby's 4 month checkup.
- Prevent your baby from getting a flat head.
- Make a plan when your baby cries.
- Prevent choking.

For the Health of All Our Children

Watch Me Grow Washington is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

 @WatchMeGrowWA  www.watchmegrowwa.org

