

4 - 6 months old

Starting to Explore!



Your baby is learning about the world around them

This handout will give you some key points on what to expect as your baby starts to respond more to you and learns to play.

Feeding Your Baby

Most infants are ready to start solid foods at around 6 months old. Understanding your baby's signs of readiness is important. Infants are ready for complementary solid food if they:

- ♥ Can sit up with very little support in a high chair
- ♥ Can have good control over their head, neck and trunk.
- ♥ Can reach out for food and open their mouth when food is offered
- ♥ Can turn their head away to let you know they are full

[Watch this video to learn more.](#)

Wondering how to introduce solid food to your baby? UnlockFood.ca has some great information to get you started. Starting at 6 months of age, offer a [variety of food textures](#) to help your baby learn skills such as chewing and self-feeding. Starting at 6 months of age, make sure to [introduce iron-rich foods first](#), as your baby needs extra iron. As you begin to introduce water, use an open cup to teach them drinking skills.

Contact [Health Connect Ontario](#) to speak to a Registered Dietitian. You can access free nutrition information and advice by calling 811 or the Toll-free TTY line: 1-866-797-0007 or by starting a live chat.

[Our website](#) also has a number of resources to help you every step of your baby's development.



Active Start

Help your baby develop a lifelong love of being physically active right from the start! Tummy time helps your baby develop neck and core muscles. Place your baby on their tummy 2-3 times a day. Slowly work your way up from 1 minute of tummy time, each time, until your baby can hold their own head up, usually around 3-4 months old. Help your baby develop their hand-eye coordination by encouraging them to reach for, touch and hold things.

Your Baby's Development

Timiskaming Health Unit has tools to help you monitor your child's development at each stage of their growth and offer tips to help your child thrive. Contact us to find out more or to get your child screened.



Parent Mental Health

We all struggle from time to time and research is showing that postpartum mood disorder (PPMD) not only affects the mom but also her partner and the family as a whole. The sooner you get support, the better things will be for your family.

If you or someone you know needs support, call a public health nurse to talk about how you are feeling or see your doctor/nurse practitioner as soon as you can. If you feel you need immediate help, please call or text 9-8-8 to reach the [Suicide Crisis Helpline](#).



Connect

Your whole day likely revolves meeting your baby's needs and that can bring on feelings of loneliness and isolation. Connecting with other people and new parents can help. Some things to help minimize those feelings of loneliness can be:

- ♥ Reaching out to family and friends offers social interaction and help with the baby
- ♥ Go outside for a walk with the baby; fresh air and exercise can help relieve stress
- ♥ Join an online group for new mothers, like [Timiskaming Breastfeeding Buddies](#)
- ♥ Participate in playgroups/ drop-in centres like [EarlyON Centre](#) and [Brighter Futures](#)
- ♥ Contact a THU Healthy Babies Healthy Children Nurse (1-866-747-4305) for more support and ask about the home visiting program

Sleep Tips

Putting your baby on their back to sleep is recommended. Around 5 months old, your baby may be able to roll onto their tummy by themselves. When this happens, you do not need to roll them back onto their back to sleep.

How much does my baby need?

	Guideline
Sleep	In a 24 hour period, 4-11 month olds should be getting 12-16 hours of sleep, which includes naps.
Movement	Help your baby move in a variety of ways, especially floor-based play. More is better. This should include at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while your baby is awake.
Sitting time	Don't restrain your baby in things like a stroller or car seat for more than 1 hour at a time. Screen time is not recommended for babies under 1 year. When sitting with your baby, try reading, storytelling or singing with your baby.

From: Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (0-4)

Vaccination

Getting your child immunized protects them from a variety of diseases.

- ♥ At 4 months old, your baby is due for the same vaccines they likely got at 2 months old.
- ♥ At 6 months old, they are due for the Pediacel vaccine.

Learning & Having Fun

Babies at this age are often fascinated with their hands as they develop fine motor (using hands and fingers) and gross motor (moving arms and legs) skills. Help them develop these skills by giving them toys like rattles and baby toys with different textures. Delight your baby by playing peek-a-boo.



Teething

The first teeth normally appear between 6-10 months of age.

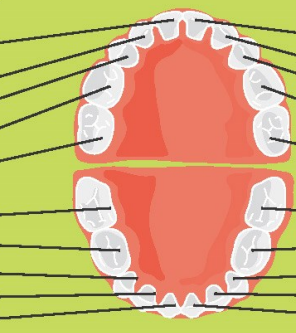
[Check this out](#) to learn more about teething and how you can help your child through the discomfort of growing teeth.



ERUPTION CHART

20 Primary (Baby) Teeth

When teeth "come in"	When teeth "fall out"
7-12 mos	6-8 yrs
9-13 mos	7-8 yrs
16-22 mos	10-12 yrs
13-19 mos	9-11 yrs
25-33 mos	10-12 yrs
20-31 mos	10-12 yrs
12-18 mos	9-11 yrs
16-23 mos	9-12 yrs
7-16 mos	7-8 yrs
6-10 mos	6-8 yrs



Protect Against Burns

At this age, your baby's skin is very thin, so it's more easily burned by hot water, hot food or liquids, and even the sun.

- Do not place hot beverage in cupholders on strollers/wagons.
- Limit your baby's sun exposure, especially during peak hours (10am-2pm).

Bath Time Safety:

- Before starting the bath, make sure you have everything you need.
- Check bath water with the inside of your forearm to make sure its not too hot (aim for 98 – 100F/37-38C).
- Keep one hand on your newborn at all times during bath time



CONTACT US!

Call us toll free 1-866-747-4305 and ask to speak to a Healthy Babies Healthy Children nurse



Services de santé du
TIMISKAMING
Health Unit