



Let's Grow

Issue #3: 4-6 Months

Isn't it amazing how your newborn has changed before your eyes into a more active and social baby? By four months, your baby can show enjoyment, indecision, and frustration. Around five months of age, your baby may begin to have new feelings of fear and excitement.

Also, your baby may have strong attachments to special people and things. Your six-month-old will start to enjoy being around other people. "Stranger anxiety" may appear, and your baby may show fear towards unfamiliar people.

At this age, babies enjoy playing "two-way" games like peek-a-boo. Play this game with your baby and watch them giggle with delight. Your baby will now play with toys for longer periods of time. Your baby may now reach to be picked up when they need a hug. They enjoy being with you. You are their first and most important teacher.

Feeding & Nutrition

How To Introduce My First Foods at About 6 Months

Breastmilk (or infant formula if you are not breastfeeding) is all the food babies need until 6 months of age. At about six months of age, begin introducing complementary solid foods while continuing to breastfeed up to two years and beyond.

At about six months of age, your baby will start to show signs that they are ready for solid foods. You will notice that they can sit up, hold their head steady and lean forward without supports. Your baby will also show an interest in food, opening their mouth wide and reaching for and picking up food to put in their mouth when they are hungry or turning away when they are full. When you offer them food the muscles in their tongue have developed enough to move food to the back of my mouth. If you use a bib, remember to take it off after they eat because the strings could become a hazard.

By six months your baby has used up their iron stores, so they need to start eating foods with lots of iron in their diet such as pureed meats, eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, fish and store-bought iron fortified cereals. Homemade cereals cannot give them the amount of iron their body needs. Offer an iron rich food at each meal.

Once your baby is ready for solids, it is okay to give them common allergens like wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk products, sesame, peanut products and tree nut products. Introduce common food allergens one at a time, wait two days before trying another common food allergen. This makes it easier to identify a food that may have caused a reaction like hives, vomiting or trouble breathing. Once your baby eats a common food allergen, such as peanut butter and tolerates it, offer it regularly to help maintain tolerance to the food. Remember that small, hard, and sticky foods can be choking hazards – mix nut butters into cereal or fruit purees to prevent choking. To learn more about allergies, visit

Reducing Your Baby's Risk of Food Allergy - Unlock Food

(<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Breastfeeding/Infant-feeding/Food-allergies-and-babies.aspx>).

If you have questions about introducing foods to your baby, visit Health811 or Phone # 811, TTY 1-866-797-0007.



Tips for feeding baby:

- Begin with small amounts (about a teaspoon) and gradually increase the amount to 1-2 teaspoons at a time. Progress to twice a day.
- Provide a variety of foods in soft textures such as pureed, mashed, finely minced, ground, or lumpy as well as finger foods.
- First thing in the morning is a great time to give your baby a new common food allergen—it is much easier to watch for a reaction during the day. Do not place food on the skin first, this can irritate the skin and be mistaken as an allergic reaction. Offer your baby a small amount on the tip of a spoon. Wait 10 minutes. If no signs of a reaction develop, you can give the rest of the food as usual.
- Don't feed honey until they are 12 months old. It could make them very sick with infant botulism.
- Remember, cereal is a food not a drink. Never put cereal in a bottle.
- If your baby has trouble learning to swallow from a baby spoon or cup, talk to their doctor or healthcare provider.
- The best way to warm foods up is by placing a bowl of food in another bowl of warm water. Heating food with a microwave can heat food unevenly. This could be dangerous for your baby. If you decide to use a microwave, STIR food thoroughly for at least 30 seconds to get rid of any hot spots.
- Serve food from a dish, not directly from a jar of baby food. In addition to introducing bacteria to the food in the jar, your baby's saliva contains enzymes which will digest the leftover food in the jar, making it thin and watery.
- Most baby food in a jar that is not used can be kept in the refrigerator up to 3 days.

To learn more about feeding your baby from 6 months to a year check out [Feeding Your Baby: A guide to help you introduce solid foods.](#)



All About Fluoride

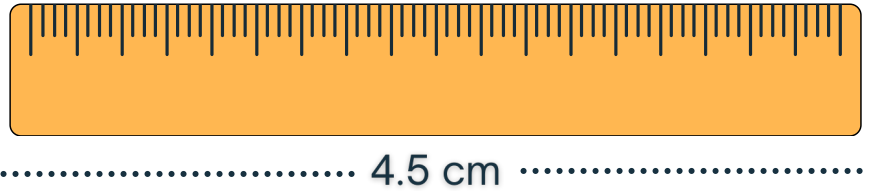
Fluoride is a substance which makes teeth harder and helps to protect teeth from cavities. Fluoride is found in some tap water (municipal and private systems), fluoridated toothpaste, commercial drinks, and foods. Most babies don't need fluoride supplements, unless your dentist says it is needed. If you have questions about fluoride, call Public Health. The City of Owen Sound has fluoride in the water.

For more information about teeth cleaning, check-ups and dental treatment for kids, including available programs that cover expenses for those eligible, visit: [Teeth cleaning, check-ups and dental treatment for kids | ontario.ca \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-dental-care\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-dental-care)

Grey Bruce Public Health 519-376-9420 ext. 8 for the Dental Program.

Safety

Babies can choke on anything that fits through a hole 4.5 centimetres in diameter. Please keep small things out of reach. Nothing replaces supervision during play and mealtimes.



It is safest to keep your baby rear-facing in their car seat as long as possible. A rear-facing seat gives the best protection for your child's head, neck, and spine in a sudden stop or crash. When your baby outgrows the infant seat, use a larger, rear-facing seat. For more information you can check out www.tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/child-car-seat-safety or [Carseat-Rear-facing-E-UA.pdf](#)

Thinking about home safety? Check out this home Safety Check list –Is Your Child Safe? series - Canada.ca (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/reports-publications/consumer-education/your-child-safe.html>)



Healthy Growth & Development

These developmental milestones have been provided to show some of the skills that mark the progress of young children as they learn to communicate. You may use these milestones to help monitor your child's development.

By 6 months most children can:

- turn to source of sounds
- startle in response to sudden, loud noises
- make different cries for different needs (for example, I'm hungry, I'm tired)
- watch your face as you talk
- smile and laugh in response to your smiles and laughs
- imitate coughs or other sounds (for example, ah, eh, buh)

Let's Play

Hickory Dickory Dock

Songs and rhymes are fun and bring you and your baby closer together. They can also be a good distraction when your baby is fussing. Your baby needs to hear you say the words correctly though, not in baby talk.

Hickory dickory dock, (Touch baby's toes, knees, hips)
The mouse ran up the clock. ('Walk' your fingers up baby's body)
The clock struck one, (Touch baby's nose)
The mouse ran down, ('Walk' your fingers down baby's body)
Hickory dickory dock. (Touch baby's toes, knees and hips again)

At this age babies need to be physically active several times a day in a variety of ways, especially through floor play. More is better. Take them out of their stroller, highchair, and activity centre. Try not to have them restrained for more than 1 hour at a time. They need to crawl, roll, and play on their tummy. They should not sit for long periods in highchairs, infant seats, Bumbo chairs or swings.



Being active when babies are 4-6 months old means:

- At least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake.
- Moving in different ways, like playing or rolling on the floor and reaching and grasping for toys. More is better.
- All activity counts and adds up throughout the day.
- Make sure their play area is safe.
- Dress them for the weather and go outside every day! All they need is one more layer than you do.
- No screen time is best.
 - Screen time is not recommended. Infants shouldn't be watching TV, computers, phones, or tablets.
 - Leave screens off in family areas - turn on music instead.
 - Keep TVs, computers, and smart phones out of bedrooms.

Tummy to Play

Supervised multiple daily tummy time sessions from birth strengthens your baby's muscles, promotes brain development and prevents baby flathead. For some tummy moves see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3rCtW9DMD4>

For more information about how to prevent your baby from developing a flat head visit: Positional Plagiocephaly | Thames Valley Children's Centre (<https://www.tvcc.on.ca/resource/positional-plagiocephaly>)

Enjoyable Ways to Help me Grow

Your baby will become more social and aware of things and people around them. They are interested in toys that have a variety of textures, shapes, colours, and sounds. Look for toys that encourage them to grasp and reach. Many educational toys will be labelled with the appropriate age. Some toys and games that they might like include:

- Play mat/kinder gym
- Squeeze toys (with well-embedded squeakers)
- Plush toys (simple, washable, soft)
- Sturdy books with simple pictures
- Toys or rattles that make noise
- Finger play games and rhymes like "Peek-a-boo" or "Pat-a-cake" games
- Rocking and gentle bouncing games to music and songs
- Feeling games so they can touch different textures such as rough and smooth, soft and hard
- Games on their tummy so they can begin to learn crawling motions



Safety must come first! Throw away broken toys. Closely check second hand toys for loose or missing parts. Please keep older children's toys with small parts out of your baby's reach. <https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en>



Reading is an Adventure

One way to show love and closeness is by reading to your baby. They like to hear the sounds and rhythms in your voice. They like to hear other voices like Grandpa's, Grandma's, and older siblings too. Large colourful picture books that are read slowly and calmly at bedtime can start a bedtime routine that they will cherish for life.

You can visit your local library or Ontario EarlyON Centre for a large variety of books. Start your own family library. Books make great gifts. Reading together is the first step toward babies talking and reading on their own.

Remember: It's **never** too early to read to a baby! The sooner, the better.



Childcare Choices

When you are looking for childcare, it is important to give yourself lots of time to check out your options carefully. Talk to your family, friends, and neighbours. Find out what choices other people have made with childcare. The careful selection of a loving and skilled childcare provider in a safe setting can have a positive effect on your baby's development.

Choosing childcare for your child is a challenging experience. We all want to feel good about our choice. Taking time to investigate your options helps to lower some of the stress which surrounds this issue.

It may seem early to think about childcare but some childcare centres have limited availability and long waitlists. Here are some questions you can ask potential childcare providers:

- *What's your philosophy?*
- *How many children attend the childcare location?*
- *What is served for meals and snacks?*
- *What activities do you do with the children?*
- *How do you handle behaviour or discipline?*

Find more questions to ask here: [Questions to ask a child care provider | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/question-ask-a-child-care-provider)

Licensed Childcare in Grey and Bruce Counties

<https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care> - this will give you a map of all Grey licensed childcares

www.brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/onelist-bruce-county - for a list of Bruce licensed childcares.



Childcare Centres

- Childcare centres are regulated and must meet licensing standards.
- There is a minimum age for enrollment.
- The main advantages of childcare centres are the hours of care and licensed staff. Subsidized rates may be available, depending on your income.

Home Childcare

- These are care providers who look after babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers in their own home. Some are licensed, while others are not.
 - Licensed childcare providers must meet certain requirements and children attending may be eligible for subsidies or rebates.
 - Home childcare providers, whether licensed or unlicensed, also have to respect certain adult and child ratios.
- Home child care providers appeals to some parents because their child will be in a home environment with fewer kids. The quality of home day care may depend on the individual providing the service.

Care in Your Own Home

- You are responsible for interviewing, screening, and selecting a person to come into your home to look after your child.
- This can be done privately or through an agency. Qualifications may vary depending on what you are looking for and willing to pay.
- Advantages are that your child stays in a familiar environment, has one-on-one attention and there is no morning rush.



For more information

- The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides information and home visits to parents who are eligible and need more support during pregnancy, after their baby is born, and as their child grows. For more information or to self-refer to the program visit Grey Bruce Public Health's website at [Home Visiting Program \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](https://publichealthgreybruce.on.ca) or call Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 extension 5.
- 211 quickly and confidentially connects people to social services and community programs across Ontario. 211 is available by phone for those looking to speak to a friendly voice or by text, online search, email, or chat. Service is available in multiple languages.
- Call 811 to find health services or information or get health advice from a registered nurse. Toll free TTY line: 1-866-797-0007. Live chat is also available. Health811 - [Health811 \(ontario.ca\)](https://health811.onario.ca)
 - Looking for guidance about food and nutrition, including infant and child feeding? Residents of Ontario can connect with a Registered Dietitian to access free nutrition information and advice by calling 811 or starting a chat at Health811.
- Caring for Kids, a website developed by the Canadian Pediatric Society, provides parents with information about their child's health and well-being. [Home | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://caringforkids.cps.ca)
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. You can learn and play with your child, meet people and get advice from early childhood professionals.
 - Find an EarlyON child and family centre:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>
 - For more information about Grey County:
<https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care/earlyon>
 - For more information about Bruce County:
<https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>
- Discover how to prevent injuries before they happen – Parachute:
www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics
- For more information about many of these topics see Your Guide to Postpartum Health and Caring for Your Baby: [postpartum-health-guide.pdf \(canada.ca\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/postpartum-health-guide.pdf)
- OMama is a website and a mobile application (app) that connects you to trusted, evidence-informed pregnancy, birth, and early parenting information (focusing on resources in Ontario, Canada). [Home - OMama](https://www.ommama.ca)
- La Leche League Canada: Breastfeeding support www.lllc.ca
- Transport Canada: www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/kids
- Health Canada Product Safety -
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/product-safety.html>

