

20906

Keeping The Well Baby Well



William at 6 months. His mother had adequate prenatal care, and he is breast fed.

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START THE BABY WITH GOOD HABITS

Regularity is one of the greatest factors in keeping the baby well. The wise mother from the first trains her baby to have good habits. Habits are the result of repeated actions, and good habits for the baby are founded on regularity in eating, sleeping, and emptying the bowels.

The baby's program is built around a regular feeding time, with a sleeping period after each feeding for the little baby. These feeding and sleeping times should be maintained steadfastly by the mother. She should not nurse the baby before his regular time to stop his crying, nor should she let anyone disturb him at the time when he should be sleeping. If he is sleeping when his feeding time comes he must be wakened and fed, except that a very young baby who is getting a 2 a. m. feeding need not be wakened for it.

The mother should plan a daily program, considering first what is best for the baby, and next how to fit his program in with the family routine.

The schedule on the following page is for the baby under 5 months. The physician will decide whether the three-hour or the four-hour plan is to be followed.

DAILY PROGRAM FOR THE WELL BABY UNDER 5 MONTHS

<i>4-hour feeding</i>	<i>3-hour feeding</i>	
6.00 a. m.	6.00 a. m.	Breast feeding. Leave in crib to sleep.
8.15	8.15	Pure cod-liver oil, then orange juice.
8.30	8.30	Bath. Before bath let baby kick and play freely on bed a few minutes without clothes.
10.00	9.00	Breast feeding.
10.20	9.20	Out of doors until feeding time. Sun bath and long nap in sun. Head shaded on hot summer days. Drink of water after nap.
2.00 p. m.	12.00 noon	Breast feeding.
2.20	12.20 p. m.	Out of doors as long as season permits, in sun except on very hot days. Long nap. Drink of water after nap.
	3.00	Breast feeding.
	3.20	Out of doors as long as season permits.
5.15	5.15	Undress for night. Before putting on baby's night clothes let him kick and play a few minutes on bed. Play must not be exciting nor rough.
5.45	5.45	Pure cod-liver oil, then orange juice.
6.00	6.00	Breast feeding.
6.20	6.20	Bed, lights out, windows open.
10.00	10.00	Breast feeding.
2.00 a. m.	2.00 a. m.	Breast feeding (this feeding should not be given after the first two or three months and may be stopped sooner if the physician so advises).

Write to the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., for a set of Baby's Daily Time Cards (six cards of different colors), which give suggestions for the well baby's daily program for successive periods of his life up to the age of 2 years.

FOOD FOR THE WELL BABY

Breast feeding.—Breast milk is the best food for the baby. Practically every well mother can nurse her baby for eight or nine months. A full-time vigorous baby should be nursed either every three or every four hours from 6 a. m. to 10 p. m. Until he is 2 months old he may be nursed once in the night if he wakes. After every feeding the baby should be held up and patted on the back to help him get rid of the air that may be in his stomach.

Additional foods.—When 2 or 3 weeks old the baby should have pure cod-liver oil, tested for vitamin D (the antirachitic factor). It may be given when the baby is undressed for the bath, and for the night. Begin with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful twice a day. As the baby gets older give more, until at 3 months he gets $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonfuls twice a day. Cod-liver oil should be given throughout the first year of the baby's life and usually should be continued throughout the second year.

Orange juice or tomato juice (fresh or canned) should be started by the end of the first month whether the baby is breast fed or artificially fed. Begin with $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoonful of orange juice in an equal amount of cool, boiled water. Increase this gradually to 1 tablespoonful twice a day. If tomato juice is used give twice as much as you would of orange juice. Both should be strained.

Mixed feeding.—At 5 months begin giving other foods before three breast feedings daily: Twice a day give a well-cooked cereal and once a day give strained vegetable soup (1 to 3 ounces). At 7 months begin giving fresh green vegetables—kale, spinach, chard, new peas, carrots, and asparagus. The vegetables should be cooked 30 minutes or less (until tender) in a very little salted water in a tightly covered double boiler, then put through a sieve or strainer. Begin by giving 1 teaspoonful a day and increase until at 8 or 9 months the baby gets 2 or 3 tablespoonfuls or more. The yolk of a coddled, soft-boiled, or hard-boiled egg may be given at 5 or 6 months. Give a little egg yolk at first (at 2 p. m. feeding), then gradually more, until the baby gets a whole yolk daily.

WEAN THE BABY GRADUALLY

At about the seventh or eighth month a bottle feeding is substituted for one breast feeding a day. Bottle feedings may be made up (by the doctor's advice) from whole milk, sugar, and water, the mixture to be boiled 3 minutes in a saucepan or 20 minutes in a double boiler. For two weeks give one bottle feeding a day and four breast feedings. Each week thereafter one more bottle feeding a day should be substituted for a breast feeding, until by the tenth month the baby is entirely off the breast and on a mixed diet of cooked cereals, strained green vegetables (spinach three times a week), and whole boiled cow's milk. (For diet before and after weaning see Baby's Daily Time Cards.)

BATHE THE BABY EVERY DAY

Individual towels and wash cloths should be used for the baby's daily bath. The room in which the bath is given should have a temperature of 70° to 75°; the bath water, 100°, gradually decreasing to 90° after the baby is 6 months old. A cool splash over the chest may help protect the baby from taking cold. The bath can be given at an hour that suits the mother, but a convenient time is before the mid-morning nursing.

TRAIN THE BABY TO SLEEP ALL NIGHT

A very young baby sleeps most of the time. As he grows older he needs less sleep, and the mother should see that his waking hours are in the daytime, preferably in the late afternoon, so that he will not be wakeful at night. By so doing she can train him to take a long, unbroken sleep at night. The daytime naps should be planned with this in mind. A long nap usually follows the bath and mid-morning feeding. Another nap, usually shorter, comes after the midday feeding. These naps should be out of doors in the sun when the weather permits. All babies should have an early bedtime. Tuck the baby away about 6 o'clock and do not play with him after that nor allow him to stay up to amuse the family. Make the baby comfortable; let the room be quiet, cool, and darkened. Shut the door and let him go to sleep by himself.

BABIES NEED PLENTY OF OUTDOOR SUNSHINE

A child needs fresh air and sunshine in order to grow. He needs the sun's rays on his skin to help his bones grow straight. Sun baths may be begun when the baby is 3 or 4 weeks old. Begin by letting the direct sun shine on the baby's hands for 10 or 15 minutes. Each day thereafter the sun bath is a little longer and the amount of skin exposed is increased a little, until after 2 or 3 months the baby's body is tanned. When the weather permits, the naps should be taken out of doors in the sun. In cold weather sun baths can be given indoors by opening the window and placing the baby in the path of the sunlight coming through the open space. Write to the U. S. Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C., for Folder No. 5, Sunlight for Babies.

BABY'S CLOTHES SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE

A simple, washable outfit should be selected for the baby, and it should be kept clean. His clothing should be adapted to the temperature of the room and to the weather. The clothing may range from a diaper alone (in the hottest weather) to a complete outfit (in the coldest weather in a cool room) of band with shoulder straps, shirt, stockings, flannel slip, and dress, with coat, cap, and booties for out of doors in cold weather. The shirt and band should be cotton in warm weather, cotton and wool or silk and wool in cold weather.

THE NURSERY NEEDS AIR AND SUN

A bright, airy, sunny room should be chosen for the nursery. Windows opening to the south, southeast, or southwest will admit the sun for many hours of the day. In the daytime the temperature should be from 65° to 70°, and at night from 45° to 55°.

If the baby can not have a room for himself, he must have at least a separate bed. A flat clothes basket makes a good bed for the first nine months. A folded blanket or a piece of table felt slipped into a pillowcase makes a washable mattress. A metal crib large enough for the child for the first six years may be used if the sides are covered by curtains or pads.

NATURE DIRECTS THE BABY'S EXERCISE

Nature provides plenty of exercise for the baby in crying, kicking his legs, tossing his arms about, stretching, and, later, in learning to creep. These movements should not be restricted by dressing him in tight clothing, swaddling him, or pinning him down in bed. During his waking hours the mother should change his position from time to time.

The baby needs regular exercise. Twice a day, before the bath in the morning and after undressing him for the night, let him kick and play freely on the bed for a few minutes while he is undressed. This is a good time to play with him and massage him gently.

LET THE DOCTOR HELP YOU KEEP THE BABY WELL

Most babies are well when they are born. To keep your baby well have the family doctor or the doctor at a child-health center give him a thorough health examination soon after he is born and when he is 4, 8, and 12 months old. Weigh him once a week and have the doctor see him for general advice at least once a month throughout the first year. Have him immunized against diphtheria when he is 6 months old or soon after, and vaccinated against smallpox before he is 1 year old. Keep him away from anyone who is ill, either child or adult (a person who has "only a cold" or "just a cough" may infect a baby and make him seriously ill). Never take him into crowded places such as stores or theaters. Teach him good health habits of eating, sleeping, exercise, and elimination. Nurse him for the first seven to nine months and after he is weaned see that the cow's milk for him is always boiled.

If you live in the Great Lakes region or other goiter sections of the country, your baby will need to have small amounts of iodine added to his diet. Ask your physician how this should be done.

When the physician examines the baby he will undress him completely, weigh and measure him, examine his head, eyes, nose, mouth, throat, ears, heart, lungs, abdomen, genitals, back, arms, legs, feet, and posture (when he is old enough to stand). He will ask about the baby's food and his habits of eating, sleeping, exercise, and elimination.

THE WELL BABY

As a rule the baby doubles his birth weight by the sixth month and trebles it by the end of the first year. During the fourth month he learns to hold up his head when his body is supported. From the third to the fifth month he begins to laugh aloud. At 7 or 8 months he may sit erect, and at 10 or 11 months he may creep. He begins to walk at 12 to 18 months. At 1 year of age he usually can speak a few words. Usually his first teeth appear at about 6 months. At 1 year he probably will have 6 teeth; at 1½ years, 12; and at 2 years, 16.

A well baby has clear skin, bright, wide-open eyes, springy muscles, and a contented expression. He cries very little, has a good appetite, sleeps quietly with mouth closed, and has bowel movements of the normal number, color, and consistency (see *Infant Care*, p. 56, Children's Bureau Publication No. 8). He shows no evidence of pain or discomfort, and he gains steadily in weight, height, and ability to do things.

If your baby does not have these signs of health and normal development, tell the doctor.



William at weaning time. He is now 9 months old.