

# Let's **Grow** ...with your newborn | ISSUE ONE

An amazing new relationship has begun, and questions abound. Where can you find answers to this endless supply of questions?

As parents with a newborn, you may not have time to read a lot of parenting books. We would like to make your life a little bit easier. As you reach each new stage in your child's development, you will want to know what to expect.

As your baby grows and new questions arise, you will receive your next issue of "Let's Grow". Let's Grow will focus on important information about the healthy growth and development of your child and your family.

More in-depth information is available by calling your local health unit, resource centre or library. See the back of this issue for local contact numbers and websites.

Let's Grow... Together!



Cleaning and scrubbing  
can wait till tomorrow...  
for babies grow up we've  
learned to our sorrow...

So quiet down cobwebs  
Dust go to sleep  
I'm rocking my baby  
and babies don't keep!

## Remember that...

Every baby comes home to his own unique family. Some families have two parents. Some families have only one parent. Other families are made up of step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, brothers and sisters.

After your baby is born it is important to continue to make time for yourself, and your family and friends.

Partners are very important during this time. Parenting is a team effort. Work together with your partner to care for your baby. Make time to talk with your partner. Hug each other. Touch each other. Remember why you fell in love. Accept the fact that your life will change. Making a positive change takes work.

Remember you can't be everything to everyone. Set priorities. Make a list. Do what works for you and your family. Talk with other new parents. Ask them what works for them. They've been there too!

It's important to talk about how you are feeling. Try saying things like:

"I feel cared for when..."

"I feel frustrated when..."

"I feel happy when..."

"I feel exhausted when..."

It's okay and normal to be tired. If you are feeling overwhelmed, talk to someone until you get the support and help you need. Call your physician or local health unit for supports and resources in your area.



# All About Me

## “I Am Really Amazing”

I can hear, smell, taste and see. Of all of the senses, touch is the most responsive when I am born.

**Hearing:** There is a good reason why I like to hear you talk and sing to me. I respond to your comforting voice. Did you know that when I am about one week of age, I will start to turn toward you when I hear your voice? I also like soothing, rhythmic sounds. I might startle when I hear sudden loud, sharp noises. If I don't respond to any sounds, then you should tell my doctor. Any problem which affects my hearing when I am young should be checked. These critical early sounds are already helping me to learn how to talk.

**Touch:** I especially love to be held skin-to-skin. I respond to touching, stroking, cuddling, warmth and gentle movement. All babies are not the same. Some of us like baths, some don't. Some of us like lots of movement and some of us appreciate only being cuddled softly. Most of us do like to be stroked on the face and talked to quietly.

**Sucking, Swallowing and Rooting:** I need to suck, not just for food but for comfort. Did you know that I probably sucked my thumb while I was inside your womb? I also swallowed amniotic fluid. I am programmed to seek out food, especially when you hold me close. When you stroke my cheek, you will notice that I will turn to that side. This rooting reflex will gradually disappear over time. If you notice that I don't suck, swallow or root well, call my doctor. You can find out ways to help me with this.

**Taste and Smell:** I have an acute sense of smell. I prefer sweet flavours to salty ones. I can recognize my mother's milk by its smell. If you or someone holding me is wearing a strong scented perfume, you might notice that I wrinkle up my face, turn away or cry.

**Grasping:** If you place your finger into the palm of my hand, I should hang onto it with amazing strength. As I grow older, though, I won't be as strong. I can grasp your finger when you place it into my hand but I cannot reach and grasp.

**Sight:** I can focus within a range of 20cm (eight inches). Guess what? This is the exact distance between your face and mine when I am feeding! I like contrasting colours and patterns.





## ◀...Talk

### **The Moon Is Round**

Babies make all kinds of sounds. Imitate her sounds and facial expressions. She is already practicing how to talk. Familiar songs and rhymes will help to calm her.

*The moon is round, as round can be,*

(Trace a circle with your finger around the baby's face, touching gently.)

*Two eyes, a nose and a mouth,*

(Touch under the baby's eyes and on her mouth.)

*Like me!*

(And here's the smile, of course.)



## ◀...Play

### **Different Positions**

Babies like to be held in different positions. Hold him on your lap, in your arms and at your shoulders. Feed and hold him with both your right and left arms. Variety lets him see the world in different ways. It also helps him strengthen all of his muscles. Keep him in his infant seat or swing for only short periods of time. He needs to be out so he can stretch and move.



## ◀...Teach

### **Tell Me About Your Day**

She loves to see your face. When you hold, cuddle and feed her, look at her and talk to her. It doesn't matter what you say. Tell her about your day. Your voice is interesting and it soothes her. You can sing too. She doesn't mind if you are not on key. She just loves to hear your voice and look into your eyes.

## Sometimes babies cry

All babies cry. Some babies cry more than others. Sometimes they cry because they are hungry or tired or uncomfortable, but there may be times that you cannot figure out what is wrong. Your job is not to make baby stop crying, but to offer your comfort. You can try comforting your baby by breastfeeding, holding him skin-to-skin, walking, rocking or standing and swaying. Try changing his diaper or changing his clothes if he seems too warm or too cool.

The most important thing you can do for your baby is to stay calm. This won't always be easy. If you feel frustrated, put him in his crib where he is safe and walk away for a few minutes until you feel better. The worst thing that you can do is shake him. His neck is weak and his head is heavy. Shaking will hurt his brain and may cause blindness, paralysis, learning disabilities or even death. Please know that your baby is not trying to make you angry.

If you think that your baby might be ill, take him to see the doctor, but otherwise he is probably experiencing the *Period of PURPLE Crying*. If you don't know about this, check the website or call your local health unit for more information. This difficult time will pass. It is normal and in no way related to your baby's long term health or your parenting.

### **Dehydration**

As a newborn, your baby's body loses fluid more quickly than older children or adults. Watch for signs of dehydration such as: dry mouth, sunken eyes, and fewer wet diapers.

**If your baby shows any of these signs, call the doctor or take her to the hospital immediately.**



## When should you be concerned?

It's not always easy to know what's normal and what isn't - especially when your baby is very young. Never hesitate to call the doctor if you are at all worried about your baby.

### Call if:

- baby under 6 months has a fever (temperature above 37.3° C / 99.1° F armpit or 38° C / 100.4° F rectum)
- baby is jaundiced (his skin or eyes are yellow in colour)
- baby's diaper is dry for more than 4 hours (after day 4)
- baby is very tired and does not wake easily
- baby will not nurse or falls asleep after starting to feed
- baby vomits forcefully (not "spitting-up")
- soft spot on the top of baby's head seems either sunken or is bulging outward
- there is discharge or odour from baby's umbilical cord



## **St. Thomas Site**

1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON N5P 1G9  
519-631-9900 | 1-800-922-0096

## **Woodstock Site**

410 Buller Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 4N2  
519-421-9901 | 1-800-922-0096

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