

# WELCOME BABY Newsletter for 1 Month

**Dear Parents,**

WELCOME BABY! congratulates you on the birth of your new baby! We wish you and your family much happiness and good health!

Parenting is one of the most important jobs you will ever do, the most rewarding, and at times, the most frustrating. You are probably wondering now if you'll ever get enough sleep and you might be feeling a little overwhelmed. Remember, your baby prefers you, his parents, more than anyone else in the world. You are your baby's best companion. Nurturing is in our human nature, it is what we do, it is what we can do best.

We'll be sending you a series of developmental newsletters that can help answer questions you might have. You are always welcome to call WELCOME BABY! for support or information, 360-419-3324

We want you to understand your new baby, learn about her, her **cues and signals**, what she is trying to tell you. Babies are natural communicators and some give clearer signals than others, just as parents do. What do we mean by cues and signals?

Have you noticed when your baby is quiet, awake and alert, how she looks around, how her eyes brighten when you smile at her? She's telling you how happy she is to see you.

Have you noticed that sometimes your baby yawns or sneezes or looks away - just when you want to play? He's telling you he needs to take a break.

In his first weeks of life a new baby can learn only a little at a time and can easily become over-stimulated. Let him rest a minute, stay still and attentive and soon he'll look back at you. Your baby will let you know what he needs.

## COMFORTING

A baby cries for any number of reasons, discomfort, hunger, a need to have his diaper changed, or to dispel energy. His nervous system is still "getting organized" and fussy crying is one way your baby might show you his "growing pains".

When your baby cries, respond to him as soon as possible. Remember, **you cannot "spoil" a newborn baby** or a young infant. He can only "ask" for what he needs. If you've tried feeding, burping, changing and cuddling, and he still cries:

Try putting your baby down for 10 - 15 minutes so he can "let off steam".  
Then, pick him up again and see if he needs to burp.  
Put him down again to "let off steam" (10-15 minutes).  
Repeat this cycle three or four times.  
Your baby will be more "organized" and will probably sleep better.



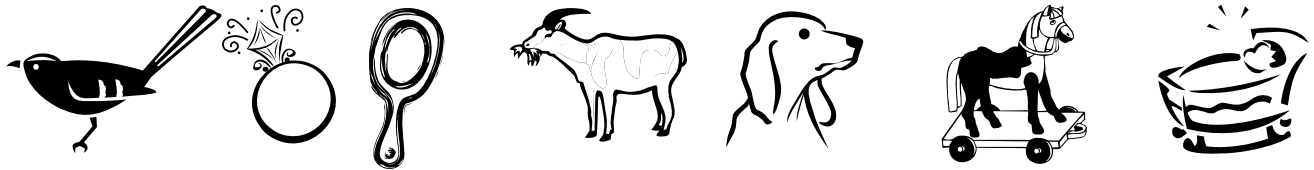
It is natural to think we need to hold our baby every minute when he's fussy, but sometimes, a baby needs stillness and rest, and the calm of being put down. If you think your baby's crying is excessive, don't hesitate to call your doctor. **Remember, you know your baby best.**

When your baby is fussy, you'll probably find yourself walking around with her. Gentle rocking and swaying back and forth are rhythmic movements that comfort babies. Humming, singing, and rhyming words are sounds that every baby loves. The mother's rhythmic heartbeat was the first sound she heard before birth, the same kind of sound gives her pleasure after birth.

But some babies seem more fussy than others and yours might be one of them. Babies born prematurely or with health issues sometimes have a more difficult time trying to calm themselves, they startle easily and seem more distressed by change, noise or touch. Your baby may fuss and cry a lot until you feel like crying, too. Try not to blame yourself; babies cry, it is what they do, and crying – for both you and baby – actually can help you to relax. Crying is part of the body's own healing system, it relieves stress.

Almost all babies have a fussy time during the day, often in the evening between 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. this fussy time often reaches a peak between six and eight weeks of age. And then, like the sun coming out, baby smiles at you, and you know things are going to get better.

Babies like familiar things and you'll soon find that your baby seems to calm down with certain songs; and you'll soon know which are your baby's favorites. Don't worry if you can't carry a tune! Sing and hum anyway! Grandparents often know songs and rhymes that we've forgotten; it is often their special bond with baby, to read aloud and sing.



Do you know this song, "Hush, Little Baby"? (You can say "gonna" in this song.)

Hush, little baby, don't say a word,  
Mama's (Papa's) gonna buy you a mockingbird.  
If that mockingbird don't sing,  
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.

If that diamond ring turns to brass,  
Mama's gonna buy you a looking glass.  
If that looking glass gets broke,  
Mama's gonna buy you a billy-goat.

If that billy-goat won't pull,  
Mama's gonna buy you a cart and bull.  
If that cart and bull turns over,  
Mama's gonna buy you a dog named Rover.

If that dog named Rover won't bark,  
Mama's gonna buy you a horse and cart.  
And if that horse and cart fall down,  
You'll still be the sweetest little baby in town.

## SLEEP, REST and EMOTIONS

As you gain confidence – and get more sleep – you'll be able to predict what your baby needs. You'll know – most of the time – just what to do to comfort her. Babies teach us about ourselves. When our baby arrives we are sometimes full of feelings we never knew existed before. It is easy for parents to feel overwhelmed, or overstimulated, just like baby. If you find yourself crying, don't be surprised; the "baby-blues" can be intense. Try not to feel guilty. Mothers, fathers and babies can all be fussy – sometimes at the very same time! It is no one's fault. Adoptive parents and grandparents can also find themselves crying unexpectedly.

In a family, everyone's role changes when a new baby arrives. It might seem as though everyone has a different opinion about what is the best thing to do. New parents can feel protective and sensitive about their baby and this is normal.

*Sleep and rest -- good medicine for the emotions!*

Many parents find a lot of good information in this book: [Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child](#), by Marc Weissbluth, M.D., Ballantine Publishing Group, New York, 1999.



If you find yourself crying more than your baby and the "blues" don't seem to lift, please call your doctor or nurse. Our WELCOME BABY! program (360-419-3324) has resources and information on postpartum mood issues that we can share with you. We want you to have the best experience possible with your baby and your own good health is necessary. Sometimes just getting outdoors for some fresh air can do wonders for both you and baby. Socializing with friends or other new parents can also help lift one's spirits; we have a Mother-Baby group that meets every Tuesday afternoon, see more information at the end of this letter.

## COMMUNICATION

Best of all, is baby's smile. Has your baby given you a real smile? This is the time babies try out their first social smiles. How wonderful! Your baby may even start to "coo" and you can almost have a conversation with him - *smile, coo, smile, coo*. Your baby is making a relationship with you just as you are with him. Everyone who comes into his life begins a special relationship with your baby: his daddy, grandma, grandpa; even the dog and cat. Your baby finds his own special ways to communicate with each of them.



You might notice that your baby *suck, suck, suck, suck.....pause; suck, suck, suck, suck.....pause*. Some people say this is baby's first attempt to communicate with you. What do we mean? Many parents find that they jiggle their baby and smile or talk to her when she stops sucking; they say, "*Good girl!*" or "*Good boy.*" This encouragement keeps him nursing (or feeding from the bottle). This simple beginning is one of the countless "games of communication" that you'll play with your baby. Watch your baby – and yourself – and see if this is something you are already doing.

Babies are born communicators and they love the sound of your voice, after all, they heard you during nine months of pregnancy, especially during the last trimester. Some parents find pleasure lying in bed and reading aloud their own favorite childhood stories while baby snoozes with them.

In some ways, this is the easiest time to read to babies, they don't try to grab and eat the book! If you have older children this is a great time to spend reading on the sofa. Nursing babies, once they get settled, don't mind at all if a sibling is cuddled up on the other side listening to the same story; this way, everyone is on the same page. Enjoy your baby and please remember to get plenty of rest.

*Meredith Baker* © 2006

For first-time parents, we have a **Mother-Baby Play Time** (Dads are welcome, too!) every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 – 4:00. This drop-in group meets in the Family Birth Center Waiting Room, Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon. Please call for more information, **360-419-3324**.

WELCOME BABY! is a parent support and education program available to families of **all** children, birth to age, three in Skagit County. WELCOME BABY! is sponsored by Skagit County Public Health, Skagit Valley Hospital, Island Hospital, Kiwanis, Rotary, Friends of Welcome Baby & Baby Talk and United Way of Skagit County.

*Best wishes from Friends of Welcome Baby, watch for another newsletter when your baby is 2 months old.*