

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Cooperative Extension

Hello!

Welcome to the “Zero to One” newsletter series. This newsletter will come to you once a month during your baby’s first year. It will bring you information on Baby’s growth, play, health and safety, and personal and family development. You will find out about books, pamphlets, and organizations. We care about babies and their families and know you do, too.

Iowa State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

We’re sure that you will use your knowledge, your good judgment, and lots of tender loving care to grow with your infant. That’s what “Zero to One” is all about.

Sincerely yours,



Extension Specialist
Human Development/Family Life



zero to one

news about infants during the first year | **month one**

Health and safety

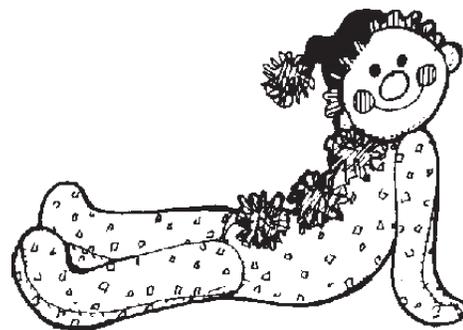
Your baby will be spending much of the time resting or sleeping. Think SAFETY for sleeping places. You might be using a basket or bassinet—or perhaps you have been given a cradle. Some of you may be starting with a crib. Whether this item is new or used, be certain to check for the following:

- snug fitting mattress—no pillow
- smooth edges
- no plastic packaging
- non-toxic paint
- bars no farther than 2 3/8 inches apart

When your baby is older, be sure the sides are high enough so that he or she can’t climb over.

What’s happening?

You’re growing used to the physical appearance and abilities of the little one who has joined your family. Funny looking and beautiful—all at the same time! Even though babies are dependent on parents for their bodily needs, they also have a special “infant power.”



Games babies play

Playing is Learning:

Staring at objects

Following objects with eyes

Listening to soft sounds

Grasping a rattle or other safe hand toy;
then dropping it

Learning is Loving:

Grasping your fingers

Listening to your comforting voice when
you're near

Feeling your warm body, gentle touch

Watching your friendly smile

Be good to yourself

Taking good care of Baby requires much of your time. When you're taking care of your baby, remember to take care of yourself. It's one of the best things you can do for Baby. Your mental and physical health are important during these early months of your baby's life. Get enough sleep and watch your diet. Have some time alone. You may need to request support from other adults to do this, but remember, you and your baby will benefit.

People who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one.

Leo J. Burke

Focus on family

How do you feel about the baby as a family member? If there are other children in the family, how do they react to the baby as a family member? Be sure they are included in the excitement and allowed to help in ways they are able.

Baby is new to the world. It is through the family that a baby learns to get along. But Baby is not the only one learning. Mom and Dad can learn, too. Loving each other and loving your baby will lead you to act in ways that are good for all of you. Sharing time and activities with your baby will develop your love. Bathing, feeding, changing diapers, cuddling, playing, talking, and soothing all add up to a loving, nurturing family.

Not for mothers only

In addition to your own growing knowledge, you may at times want to refer to a baby-care guide for answers to your questions or for support for your decisions. Try these or check with your baby's doctor for other suggestions.

The First Twelve Months of Life: Your Baby's Growth Month by Month by Frank Caplan. Very readable for new parents or "old hands." In paperback by Bantam.

Your Baby and Child from Birth to Age Five by Penelope Leach. In paperback by Knopf.

Caring for Your Baby and Child: Birth to Age Five by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, M.D., Editor. In paperback by Bantam.

We'll offer many reading suggestions in the year ahead so you may want to check the library frequently or get a book "co-op" going with other new parents you know.

. . . and so forth

Baby-record books

Besides keeping a baby-care book, also keep a record book of your baby's growth. Keep records of shots and illnesses as well as records of those memorable occasions ahead. Add pictures as your baby grows. Share this personal history together. Children love to know about "when I was a baby." These are busy times, but at least make quick notes and fill in the book later when you have a moment. Your efforts will be rewarded.

Breast or bottle?

Babies grow whether you decide to breastfeed or bottle feed. You can find support for either feeding method you choose. Your baby's doctors and public health nurses can help, or you may wish to talk with other mothers. La Leche Leagues are groups of mothers who can help with breastfeeding questions. You'll find them listed in your phone book or ask your baby's doctor if there is a local chapter. Karen Pryor's book, *Nursing Your Baby*, is also useful. Dad's support is helpful if Mom is breastfeeding. He can help more directly if a bottle is chosen.

Straight talk about . . .

Colic

About 80 percent of all babies are troubled with colic. Colic is a term for the hard, almost endless crying that often starts in the first month and generally disappears by the time baby is three months old. These crying spells often happen in the evening. The shrieking can be frustrating; even though you want so much to comfort your little one, rocking, burping, picking up, putting down, a pacifier, or drinks of water seem to have little effect. You'll try them all for the baby's sake and to save your own nerves, but generally you'll have to wait it out, knowing that the baby will be alright and eventually grow out of the problem.

Young infants tend to swallow air. If the bubble is not brought up by burping, it may pass into the intestine causing the "tummy pains" that make an infant draw up its legs and cry. Try to soothe your baby by walking, speaking softly, and cuddling. If possible, let someone else handle baby care duties every other night. Also, find ways to take time for yourself. Help from others can get you through this time.

Postpartum emotions

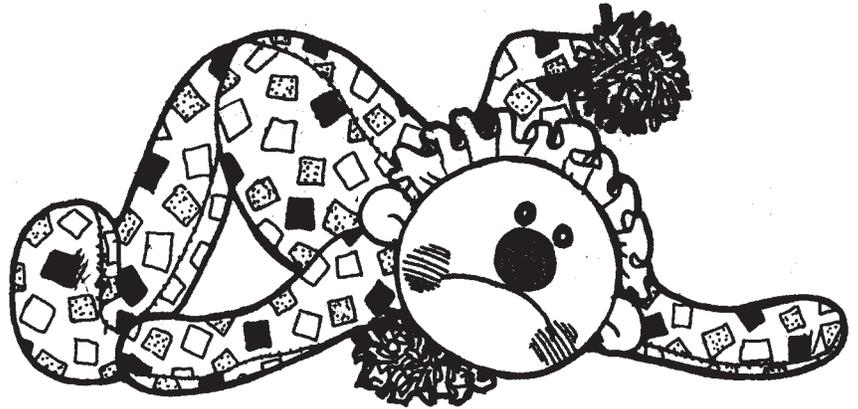
Notice that name is postpartum emotions—*not* postpartum depression. Read on and you'll find out why. But first, let's make sure we're on the same track. Postpartum means after (post) birth (partum). Emotion means a "state of feeling."

New mothers are not always depressed.

As a matter of fact, many feel "high as a kite." This is expressed by statements such as "I've done it," "She's beautiful," "It's over," "It's a miracle," and "I'm a mother." This high feeling is also noticeable in the mother as she anxiously awaits her baby's awakening, makes sure everything is right for baby and family, and says that motherhood is a no-hassle experience.

But some mothers are hassled.

Some mothers get depressed at times. They feel down and out. Baby's demands are too much—each cry is another example of the overwhelming job of mothering. There is no time for self—if only Baby didn't need so much, things might be better.



Whichever you are—high, hassled, or anywhere in between—you can do it. Look for help from family, friends, your doctor, and clergy.

Be informed—knowledge is necessary

Talk it over—with someone you trust

Take it easy—relax, get in touch with yourself

Remember—your baby needs you; you are really special in baby's life.

Fathers have feelings too.

Dads are becoming more involved in birth and child care. That's great because the whole family benefits. Most new moms are grateful for the support at emotional times like this. Men have their emotional adjustments to make, too, as they become fathers. Feelings of anxiety, resentment, and jealousy may be felt. So, Dad, let your feelings be known. Work at this new business of being parents together.

For further reading, look in the index of one of your baby-care books for "Postpartum."

Welcome to parenthood!

Getting it together

Parenting is a big responsibility. Big—yes. Tough—not always. Your knowledge, good judgment, and tender loving care will help you the most in parenting. When you need other help, let someone know.

- If you want to know more about anything in this newsletter, contact your local extension office.
- If you have questions about your baby, see a doctor, nurse, or other medical practitioner.
- If you are feeling uneasy about being a parent, talk to a good friend, relative, doctor, or anyone else that you can trust.

Prepared by extension specialists and child development faculty at Iowa State University. Arranged for distribution by Lesia Oesterreich, extension specialist in human development and family studies. Edited by Carol Ouverson, extension communication specialist.

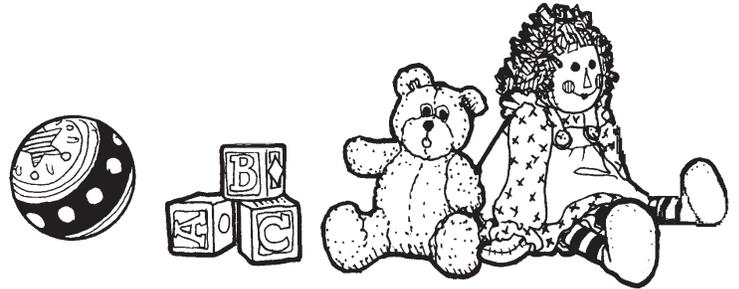
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- If you are already experiencing the joys of parenting, share this feeling with your family and others who have new babies.
- If you love your baby's smile, keep up the good work.



... and justice for all

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