

# Infant Health

## How do I keep my baby healthy?

- Baby's routine is important (including sleep/wake schedule, feeding strategies, hunger cues, hydration, physical activity, bathing).
- Don't let anyone smoke in your home, car, or anywhere near your baby. Secondhand smoke can cause breathing, learning, and behavior problems.
- Keep your baby away from people who have colds. Make sure that people who hold your baby have clean hands and wash your hands after every diaper change.
- Clean your baby's gums with a cloth dampened with water twice a day. This will help prevent tooth decay when her teeth come in. Also, don't give your baby sugary drinks or let her fall asleep with a bottle in her mouth.
- Gently hold, hug, cuddle, and comfort you baby. You can't overdo it. This is how your baby gets emotionally attached to you. Attachment is very important to your baby's long-term health and development.

## When do I take my baby to the doctor?

- Take your baby to the doctor for well-child visits. These visits are usually at 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12months. Medicaid pays for them.
- Keep your baby's immunizations up to date to protect against terrible diseases.
- Call the doctor if your baby:
  - Has a fever over 100.4 degrees
  - Refuses to eat
  - Has persistent vomiting or diarrhea
  - Is fussier than unusual
  - Is sleeping more than usual
  - Is wheezing or has trouble breathing
  - Is pulling on his ears a lot
- Follow the doctor's recommendations.
- Ask the doctor before you give your baby over-the-counter medicine.
- Always keep your doctor's phone number where you can find it. You might need it in a hurry.
- Your MIHP worker can help you find a baby doctor if you don't have one.



# Infant Safety

## How do I make sure my baby is safe?

- Put your baby to sleep on his back EVERY TIME and in a crib – not on a couch, bed or pillow. Don't put stuffed toys, loose bedding or blankets in the crib.
- Do not sleep with the baby in your bed. You could roll over and smother her.
- Place your baby in a car safety seat EVERY TIME he/she rides in the car.



- NEVER hold your baby in your lap while you are driving or riding in a car.
  - NEVER leave your baby alone in the car – not even for one second.
  - NEVER shake your baby. Babies have very weak neck muscles that are not yet able to support their heads. If you shake your baby you can damage his brain and delay normal development.
  - NEVER hit your baby.
- Never let anyone else shake or hit your baby. Be very careful about who you let babysit for you.
  - Don't leave your baby alone in a room with small children or pets.
  - NEVER leave your baby alone in bath water – even for a second.
  - Keep the bathroom door closed. Your baby can drown in a toilet.
  - Keep your baby away from pools, ponds, and creeks.
  - Ask your doctor to test your baby for lead poisoning.
  - Do not allow guns or drugs in your home.
  - Keep knives and matches out of reach.
  - Put child safety plugs in all open electrical outlets.
  - Put gates across steps and stairs.
  - Lock the doors to balconies and decks.
  - Put baby locks on cabinets and tie up cords from mini-blinds and drapes out of baby's reach.

## Where can I get more information about keeping my baby safe?

- Your MIHP worker
- Your local Safe Kids office
- Online at [www.michigan.gov/mihp](http://www.michigan.gov/mihp)

# Feeding and Nutrition

## What is WIC?

- WIC is a food program for families with low to middle incomes. Pregnant women, moms, babies, and children up to age 5 can get WIC food. WIC food is worth \$30-\$112 or more per month per person. WIC can also help with nutrition education and breastfeeding.
- WIC is a great deal for you and your baby!



## Why do doctors say that breastfeeding is best for my baby?

- Breast milk helps your baby's brain grow.
  - It's easier to digest - your baby will have less diarrhea and won't spit up as much.
  - Your baby will be healthier, with fewer colds, ear infections, and allergies.
  - Your baby will be less likely to have asthma or juvenile diabetes.
  - It's a special experience that strengthens the bond between you and your baby.
  - There's no cost.
- You don't have to sterilize bottle and nipples.
  - It burns calories and can help you lose weight.

## What about bottle feeding?

- Ask your doctor what kind of formula is best for your baby.
- Follow formula mixing instructions carefully.
- Never heat formula in the microwave – it can get too hot.
- Always check the temperature by shaking a few drops on your wrist.
- Hold her head up a little higher than her tummy.
- Hold the bottom of the bottle up so that the nipple stays full of formula.
- Throw out any formula that's left after a feeding.
- Do not give your baby fluids other than breast milk – no fruit juice or other sugary drinks.
- Do not let your baby fall asleep with the bottle in his mouth.
- NEVER lay your baby down and prop her bottle.

## Where can I get more information about feeding my baby?

- Your MIHP worker
- Your WIC office.
- Online at [www.michigan.gov/mihp](http://www.michigan.gov/mihp)

## General Development



MIHP will do developmental screening for your baby.

Screening will cover different areas of development:

- ✓ Gross motor
- ✓ Fine motor
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Problem-solving
- ✓ Personal-social
- ✓ Social-emotional

### How can I help my baby's social-emotional development?

- Your baby's very first relationship is with you. Your job is to teach her that her little world is a safe place and that she is loved. Quickly respond to her needs and be very gentle and loving. Then you and she will form a strong emotional attachment to each other. This is the most important thing you can do to help your baby's development.
- When your baby is fussy or crying, try to uncover real reason for his behavior (scared, hungry, thirsty, cold, hot, etc.).

### What signs of should I watch out for that could indicate my baby needs a developmental evaluation?

- From birth to 12 months:
  - Has eating difficulties; is not gaining weight or is losing weight; not growing physically
  - Has sleeping difficulties (sleeps too much or too little)
  - Shows little preference for any particular adult
  - Resists holding
  - Cries for prolonged periods
  - Is hard to console
  - Rarely makes eye contact with others
  - Doesn't show interest in people or things going on around him or her
  - Doesn't respond to simple games like peek-a-boo

### Where can I get more information about helping my baby's development?

- Your MIHP worker
- Online at [www.michigan.gov/mihp](http://www.michigan.gov/mihp)

# Family Social Support, Parenting and Childcare

## What is family social support?

- Family social support means having people to turn to when you need help as a parent.
- Supportive people:
  - Listen to you.
  - Treat you with kindness and respect.
  - Help you figure out how to solve the problems that come with being a parent.
  - Give you practical help, such as taking care of your baby when you need a break.



## Where do I go to get help with childcare?

- You need people to care for your baby when you need to go somewhere without your baby or if you need a break from your baby. These people might include:
  - Father of baby
  - Baby's grandparents or other relatives (including older children)
  - Friends or neighbors
  - People at place of worship
  - Drop-in child care program
- The Dept. of Human Services (DHS) may help you pay for childcare if you work or go to school. DHS may pay for child care at:
  - Child care centers, family homes (up to 6 kids), and group homes (up to 12 kids).
  - A relative's home or in your home, if your provider goes to training.

## Where can I get more information about parenting and childcare support ?

- Your doctor.
- Your MIHP worker
- DHS childcare web site.
- Online at [www.michigan.gov/mihp](http://www.michigan.gov/mihp).

## Take Care of Yourself So You Can Take Care of Your Baby!

You are the most important person in the world to your baby. You need to take good care of yourself, so you can take care of your baby.

- See your doctor for your postpartum visit.
- Use family planning (birth control).
- Wait at least 18 months after giving birth before getting pregnant again.
- Find someone to care for your baby so you can take breaks
- When you feel down or alone, reach out for support.



Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP)  
Michigan Department of Community Health

MIHP website [www.michigan.gov/mihp](http://www.michigan.gov/mihp)

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