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AGES & STAGES

Healthy Habits to Master in Your Baby's First Two Years

Make the Most of the First 2 Years Set Your Child Up for Success!

Many parents know that the first 2 years of a child's life are important for brain development and building healthy relationships. But this time is also very important to help children stay at a healthy weight as they grow.

The first 2 years of your baby's life set her up for healthy growth and development — so start teaching healthy habits right away.



Healthy Eating Starts Now



Responsive feeding helps you and your child build a healthy relationship with food and feeding.

- Responsive feeding means that you watch for your baby's hunger and fullness cues, respond warmly and promptly, and focus on creating a positive feeding experience.

Studies suggest that breastfed babies are more likely to have a healthy weight when they get older.

- Breastfed babies have more control over the feeding experience, so they are less likely to be overfed.



Giving your baby a variety of foods makes it less likely that he'll be a picky eater later on.

- Babies form their taste patterns by 9 months old. So when you start feeding your baby solid foods, it's important to offer a variety of colors, textures, and flavors.
- Giving your baby fruits and vegetables early and often makes it more likely he'll eat them later.

Babies and toddlers who drink fruit juice and other sugary drinks are more likely to have tooth decay and less likely to drink water as they grow older.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies (under 1 year old) drink only breast milk or formula. Babies older than 4 months can also have water.
- The healthiest choices for toddlers (1 to 3 years old) are water, milk, or breast milk. If you do offer juice, limit it to 4 ounces per day.



Sleep Matters from the Start

Getting enough sleep can help your child stay at a healthy weight later in life. It's linked to better mental health, too.

Babies and children thrive on routines, including consistent bedtimes and naptimes — so it's important to start healthy sleep habits right away.



Active Babies Become Active Children

Babies and toddlers need active play to grow healthy! Many toddlers don't get enough active play. Spending too much time in strollers, swings, and car seats can lead to motor delays.





Screen Time Habits Start Early

Up to 30% of toddlers already have TVs in their bedroom. But children with TVs in their bedrooms are more likely to be overweight, get less sleep, and have mental health problems as teens.

Children learn through active play and conversations, so make it a priority for your child to have plenty of real life interactions and experiences — and less screen time!



Healthy Parents, Healthy Child

When it comes to starting healthy habits, **parents are the most important influence** in a young child's life. Be a role model for your child by eating healthy, taking time to be active, and limiting your own screen time.




Set your child up for healthy growth and development by teaching healthy habits now. It's never too early to start!

For more information, visit www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy.

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American Academy of Pediatrics
Institute for Healthy
Childhood Weight
WHERE LIFELONG RESULTS BEGIN

Additional Information from HealthyChildren.org:

- [Tracking Your Baby's Weight and Measurements \(/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Tracking-Your-Babys-Weight-and-Measurements.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Tracking-Your-Babys-Weight-and-Measurements.aspx)
- [How Often and How Much Should Your Baby Eat? \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/How-Often-and-How-Much-Should-Your-Baby-Eat.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/How-Often-and-How-Much-Should-Your-Baby-Eat.aspx)
- [Milestones During the First 2 Years \(/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Milestones-During-The-First-2-Years.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Milestones-During-The-First-2-Years.aspx)
- [Healthy Digital Media Use Habits for Babies, Toddlers & Preschoolers \(/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Healthy-Digital-Media-Use-Habits-for-Babies-Toddlers-Preschoolers.aspx\)](/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Healthy-Digital-Media-Use-Habits-for-Babies-Toddlers-Preschoolers.aspx)
- [Healthy Sleep Habits: How Many Hours Does Your Child Need \(/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Healthy-Sleep-Habits-How-Many-Hours-Does-Your-Child-Need.aspx\)](/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Healthy-Sleep-Habits-How-Many-Hours-Does-Your-Child-Need.aspx)
- [Growing Healthy \(/english/healthy-living/growing-healthy/pages/default.aspx\)](/english/healthy-living/growing-healthy/pages/default.aspx)

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e HONcode standard for trustworthy health (<http://www.healthonnet.org/HONcode/Conduct.html>)

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