

Now you are a Mother



by
Du'aa' Ra'oof Shaheen

Translated by
Huda al-Khattab



DARUSSALAM
GLOBAL LEADER IN ISLAMIC BOOKS

Now you Are A “Mother”

A Practical and Up-to-Date New Mother's Handbook

By: Du'aa Raof Shaheen

Translation: Huda Al-Khattab

Published By: Darussalam Publishers & Distributers

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED©

No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

Preface

It may be thought that bearing and raising babies is the most natural thing in the world, and indeed all mothers, regardless of background and education, have natural instincts and compassion that enable them to care for their children. But as life becomes more complicated and medical science develops, it has become essential for mothers to learn about the best ways of raising children, protecting them from illness and interacting with them in ways that will give them self confidence, whilst at the same time giving them discipline and instilling in them faith, moral values and sound ethics.

In this book, the reader will find an overview of the mother's role in the first four years of the child's life and increase awareness of important issues to which parents must pay attention. The author also highlights some traditional child-rearing practices that are in fact detrimental to the child's well being and suggests alternatives.

The Islamic dimension is not forgotten either. From the first moment of the infant's life, Islamic teachings and practice play a prominent role; we see how the new baby is welcomed into the world in the Islamic manner.

Raising children who are sound physically, psychologically and spiritually is a complex issue. This book sets out guidelines for the new mother to help her raise a balanced child who will be an asset to himself, his family and society as a whole.

Huda al-Khattab

January 2012, Safar 1433

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, and upon all his family and Companions.

Dear mother, I congratulate you on the arrival of the new baby you have been blessed with, or whose arrival you are expecting soon in sha Allah. But you must prepare thoroughly for the arrival of this newcomer, because today we are living in an era of rapid changes and developments, as a result of the resources we have at our disposal and the challenges we are facing. Therefore it is essential to raise a child who is able to keep up to date with modern developments and face those challenges. Hence you have to be aware of everything that has to do with taking care of this child from his birth through the various stages of development, understanding what each stage requires of care, based on modern theories and research in many fields.

This book has been written to answer all the questions you may have in your mind about looking after yourself after giving birth, and everything you have to take care of for your baby, with regard to his nutrition, keeping him clean and how to dress him, as well as matters pertaining to his sleep, crying, problems that may arise, stages of growth and development and various activities he may do as he grows. There are also sections on child health, sickness and how to deal with accidents (first aid).

I have presented these topics in a simple and straightforward manner that is suited to all mothers.

I ask Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to make this book of benefit to all mothers and also to fathers, so that they can raise a generation that will restore the ummah's glory.

A Japanese thinker says: Most nations of the world live on resources that lie beneath their feet which will run out with the passage of time. But we live on resources that are above our feet

(i.e., our brains) that increase and give as much as we take from them.

Duha Ra'oof

Contents

Now you are a Mother.....	1
A Practical and Up-to-Date New Mother's Handbook	2
From Birth to 4 Years	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Preface	3
Introduction.....	4
Maternal feelings.....	28
Preparing to welcome the newborn	29
Clothing.....	30
Hygiene	31
Feeding	32
Preparing the baby's bedroom	32
Getting around with the baby.....	32
Baby's first cry.....	32
How will your newborn look?	33
Your baby's skin	33
Your baby's hair	34
Your baby's eyes	34
Eye color	34
Your baby's mouth and nose	35
Jaundice	36
Types of jaundice	36
Physiological jaundice.....	36
Pathological jaundice.....	36

Causes of jaundice	36
Treatment for jaundice	37
Vaccinations.....	38
Islamic rulings concerning the newborn.....	40
Giving glad tidings.....	40
Reciting the adhaan and iqaamah into the baby’s ears.....	40
Tahneek	41
Shaving the child’s head and giving the weight of the hair in silver in charity.....	41
Naming the infant.....	41
Rulings on ‘aqeeqah.....	41
Timing of the ‘aqeeqah	42
How it is done	42
Conditions of the sacrifice	43
Circumcision of males.....	43
Circumcision from an Islamic point of view	44
Benefits of male circumcision	44
What is the best time for circumcision?	44
Female circumcision	45
Care of the mother after birth.....	46
Physical changes in the mother immediately after birth.....	46
Slight increase in body temperature.....	46
Slower than normal heartbeat.....	47
Difficulty in urinating and defecating	47
Changes in the uterus	47
Vaginal discharge (lochia)	48

Your stomach may be flabby and not firm	48
If you have undergone a caesarean section	48
Essential care of the mother after childbirth.....	48
Taking care of the mother after a Caesarean	49
Do I have to take a bath after giving birth?	51
How many sanitary pads will I need after giving birth?	51
When will monthly periods resume after giving birth?	52
Marital relations after giving birth.....	53
Is it possible to take birth control pills whilst breastfeeding? .	53
Breastfeeding and your figure	53
What is the best way to lose weight after giving birth?	54
Maintaining your weight.....	54
Light exercise	54
Developing eating habits that will help maintain your weight and guarantee good health	55
Eating breakfast, the most important meal of the day.....	55
Starting your lunch with vegetable soup	55
Not eating fats	56
Proper diet for a woman after giving birth.....	56
Postnatal exercises and the importance thereof.....	57
Types of exercise that are not recommended during the first few weeks after giving birth	58
Advice to the new mother	58
Exercises to regain your figure.....	59
Exercises to strengthen the abdominal muscles.....	59
Pelvic exercises	59

Pelvic floor exercises.....	59
Pelvic lift.....	59
Your figure and girdles.....	60
Emotional care of the mother after giving birth.....	61
Enjoy your child and overcome any feelings of distress or depression	62
Going back to work	64
When is the right time to go back to work?	64
Taking care of your baby from birth to 3 months.....	66
Taking care of baby.....	66
Feeding your baby	67
Breastfeeding.....	67
Benefits and advantages of breastfeeding	67
The first feeding.....	69
Advice for the first days of breastfeeding.....	69
Does my baby need water?	69
Correct position for breastfeeding	70
Latching on.....	70
Signs that the baby has latched on to the nipple in the proper way:.....	71
How to breastfeed whilst lying down	71
How do I know when my baby has had enough milk?.....	71
Advice for increasing the milk supply	72
Expressing breast milk	72
Reasons for expressing breast milk	73
How can the mother express milk from her breast?	74

Expressing milk by hand.....	74
Vacuum pumps	74
Storing expressed breast milk.....	75
Contraindications for breastfeeding	76
Factors preventing the mother from breastfeeding	76
Factors preventing the infant from breastfeeding	76
Bottle feeding	78
Types of baby formula (artificial milk)	78
Ready-made	78
Liquid concentrate	78
Dried or powdered formula	78
Equipment needed for bottle feeding	79
A few words of advice.....	79
Sterilizing bottles	80
Sterilising bottles: tried, tested and true method	80
Other methods of sterilizing bottles	81
Preparing bottles	81
Burping.....	83
Keeping your baby clean.....	84
Bathing	84
Bathing the baby – step-by-step.....	85
Cleaning the parts of your baby’s body (sponge bath)	86
Skin	86
Eyes.....	87
Ears	87

Nose	87
Nails	87
Navel (bellybutton)	87
Diapers (nappies)	88
Disposable diapers.....	88
Cloth diapers.....	88
Changing the diaper-1	88
What you will need when changing a diaper.....	89
Changing the diaper-2	89
Protecting the baby from diaper rash.....	90
Dressing your baby	91
Tips and tricks for dressing your baby	92
Dressing the baby step-by-step	92
Carrying your baby.....	93
Common childhood problems	94
High temperature	94
When should I be worried about my baby's temperature?.....	94
The most common causes of high temperature in babies.....	94
Treating high temperature in the infant.....	95
Heat rash.....	95
Protection against heat rash.....	96
How can I treat my child if he has heat rash?.....	96
Crying.....	96
HOW MUCH DO BABIES CRY ON AVERAGE?.....	97
Your baby's crying: causes and remedies	97

Hunger	97
Pain	98
Temperature	98
Wet diaper	98
Sudden changes	98
Feeling lonely	99
Fear of strangers	99
Colic	99
Causes that may lead to colic	99
How to deal with colic	100
A few words of advice.....	100
Work out your baby's problem from the sound of his crying	101
Say No to emotional weaning.....	103
A few words of advice.....	105
Sleep	106
Average sleep times of babies	106
Is it better for the mother to sleep next to her child?	107
Where should the newborn baby sleep?	107
Bassinet.....	107
Crib.....	108
Safety concerns.....	108
How to keep the baby safe when he is sleeping.....	108
Should the baby sleep on his back or on his tummy?.....	109
Do babies dream?	109
Should I leave my baby to cry on his own until he goes to sleep?.....	109

How will I know when my baby feels sleepy and that he is ready to go to sleep?	110
Types of sleep and waking in newborns	111
Deep, peaceful sleep.....	111
Active sleep.....	111
Drowsiness.....	111
Waking up calmly.....	111
Waking up energetically	112
Waking up upset	112
Encouraging your baby to develop good sleep habits	112
Is it possible to train my baby to differentiate between night and day?.....	113
Dealing with sleep disturbances in babies.....	114
Temperature in the bedroom	114
Is the baby afraid of the dark?.....	114
Some babies are bothered by excessive light in the bedroom, especially sunlight in the morning.....	114
Noise near the baby.....	115
Diaper	115
Check whether the baby's clothes are comfortable or not ...	115
Make sure that the baby's crying is not due to hunger	115
Massaging your baby	115
How to deal with early waking	116
Child development from birth to 3 months.....	117
Physical development.....	117
Rate of weight gain	117

Growth in length/height	117
Pattern of developmental milestones	118
Growth charts for girls	118
Growth charts for boys	119
The first month	120
Physical development	120
Linguistic development	121
Social-emotional development	121
The second month	121
Physical development	121
Social-emotional development	122
Linguistic development	123
The third month	123
Physical development	123
Social-emotional development (“Hello, I’m here!”)	123
Linguistic development	124
Baby from 4 to 6 months	125
Feeding your baby	125
Introducing solid food	125
A few words of advice	126
When should I start to add some solid food along with breast milk?	126
Introducing solid food	127
A few words of advice	128
Foods that must be avoided during this period	129
What is an antigen-antibody reaction?	130

Does solid food change the baby's stools?	131
How can I give my baby more kinds of solid food?.....	131
Feeding your baby in the fifth and six months	132
Feeding your baby in the sixth month	133
Development of the baby from 4 to 6 months	134
Four months old.....	134
Social-emotional development.....	134
Linguistic development.....	135
Five months old	135
Physical development.....	135
Social-emotional development.....	136
Linguistic development.....	136
Six months old	136
Physical development.....	136
Social-emotional development.....	137
Linguistic development.....	137
Your baby from 7 to 12 months.....	137
Nutrition in the seventh and eighth months	137
Examples of ideal foods in the seventh and eighth months..	138
Cereals	138
Vegetables	139
Fruits	139
How can I help my baby sleep peacefully and comfortably?.....	140
Crying.....	141
General changes at this stage.....	142

(7-12 months)	142
Teething	142
Common signs of teething	143
Taking care of the baby's teeth during and after the teething stage	143
Do pacifiers and teething rings help with teething?	144
Finger sucking	144
Reducing the pain of teething.....	145
When will my baby start remembering things?.....	146
Child development 7 to 12 months	148
The seventh month.....	148
Physical development.....	148
Social-emotional development.....	148
Linguistic development.....	148
The eighth month	148
Physical development.....	148
Linguistic development.....	149
Social-emotional development.....	149
The ninth month	150
Physical development.....	150
Linguistic development.....	151
Social-emotional development.....	151
The tenth month.....	151
Physical development.....	151
Linguistic development.....	152
Social-emotional development.....	152

The eleventh month	152
Physical development	152
Linguistic development	153
Social-emotional development	153
The twelfth month	154
Physical development	154
Linguistic development	154
Social-emotional development	155
Keeping your child safe	156
Necessary measures to keep your child safe	156
Keeping your baby safe in the kitchen	156
Keeping your baby safe in the bathroom	157
Safety measures in the bathroom	158
Keeping your baby safe in the bedroom	158
Keeping your baby safe in the house: general tips	160
Keeping your baby safe in the car	162
Important note for fathers and mothers	163
Keeping children safe when taking them outside	163
Your baby from one to two years old	165
Feeding your child	165
When is the right time to stop breastfeeding?	165
Taking care of milk teeth	167
Causes of cavities in milk teeth	167
Protection against cavities in milk teeth	167
When should the child move from the crib to a bed?	169

Pampering the child.....	169
Pampering the baby in the first few months of life	169
Pampering the baby once he is past the age of 6 to 9 months	170
Common problems in children at this stage – prevention and cure	172
Aggression in children – causes and remedy	172
Causes of aggression in children.....	172
Family disputes	172
Watching violent scenes on television.....	172
Differences in the way children in the same family are treated	173
Parent’s ignorance of proper methods of raising children	173
Ways of dealing with aggression	173
Stubbornness in children – causes and remedy	175
Kinds of stubbornness in children.....	175
Fear in children – causes and remedy	177
Types of fear in children	177
Causes of fear in children.....	178
Dealing with fears in children	179
Jealousy in children – causes and remedy	181
Most important manifestations of jealousy in children.....	181
Causes of jealousy in children.....	181
Types of jealousy in children.....	182
Dealing with jealousy in children	182
Bedwetting – causes and remedy	184

Causes of bedwetting	184
Physical causes.....	184
Psychological causes	184
Prevention and cure	185
Delay in speaking – causes and remedy	187
Prevention and cure	188
Stuttering – causes and remedy	190
Causes of stuttering	190
Prevention and cure	190
Delay in walking.....	192
Causes of that include the following:	192
Is there a remedy for delay in walking?	193
Will the baby walker help my child to walk?	194
Bowleggedness	195
Causes that may lead to bowleggedness.....	195
Physiological causes.....	195
Non-physiological causes.....	195
Manners and etiquette	196
Manners and etiquette that you should teach your child	196
Table manners	196
Etiquette of greeting (salaam)	198
Etiquette of sneezing	199
Etiquette of yawning.....	199
Toilet training.....	201
What is the right age for my child to start using the toilet? ..	201

Step-by-step guide to toilet training.....	201
Child development from 13 to 15 months.....	204
Physical development.....	204
Linguistic development.....	204
Social-emotional development.....	205
Child development from 16 to 18 months.....	207
Physical development.....	207
Linguistic development.....	207
Social-emotional development.....	207
Child development from 19 to 24 months.....	209
Physical development.....	209
Linguistic development.....	209
Social-emotional development.....	209
The Prophet (S.A.W) and children	212
Stories that highlight the attitude of the Prophet (S.A.W) towards children.....	212
Compassion of the Prophet (S.A.W) towards children	213
The Prophet’s teaching: Treating children fairly.....	215
The Prophet’s joking with children	215
The Prophet’s playing with children	216
Teaching children to have confidence in themselves and shoulder responsibility.....	218
The Prophet visiting children when they were sick	218
The Prophet’s love and concern for children.....	218
How the Prophet (S.A.W) corrected children’s mistakes.....	219
The Prophet’s attitude towards orphans.....	219

Teaching children the etiquette of asking permission to enter a room	219
The Messenger (S.A.W) teaches youngsters to lower their gaze	220
The Prophet’s concern to teach children about their religion	220
Children and television	221
Negative effects of watching television	221
Advice to help turn the television from being a destructive force to being something beneficial to children	223
Unacceptable behaviour in the family	225
Smoking	225
Arguments between the parents in front of the children	226
The solution to all of that is as follows:	227
Hitting children	228
Things that can reduce smacking of children.....	230
Insulting or swearing at children	231
Play	231
Types of play	232
Benefits of play	232
Developing the child’s skills through play	235
Make-believe and expressive games	235
Roles that the child can play	235
Artistic play	235
Constructive play	236
Cognitive play	237

Active play.....	237
Examples of fun and educational games for children.....	239
Games that the child can play in the first year of life	239
Problem-solving game	239
Eating with a spoon	239
Suspended toys or mobiles.....	240
“Musical gloves”	240
Bathtub toys	240
Peek-a-boo.....	240
Games for children over the age of one year	241
Walking games.....	241
Building games.....	241
Shape sorting games.....	241
Dominoes.....	241
Telling colors apart	242
Games to develop the sense of hearing	242
Acting games.....	242
Sheep, camel, bear, giraffe	242
“Simon says”	243
Memory game.....	243
How many names can you come up with?	243
Will it fly or not?	243
Matching.....	244
Who or what is this?	245
Active play.....	246

Spontaneous play	246
Racing.....	246
Riding bikes.....	246
Pushing and pulling toys	246
Drawing and coloring.....	247
Play Dough Recipe	248
No Cook Play Dough Recipe.....	248
Suggested things to make to make with modelling clay or play dough.....	249
Nursery rhymes and songs.....	250
Examples of some nursery rhymes or songs that mothers can teach to their children	250
Days of the Week.....	250
Some rhymes specifically for Muslim children:	253
Short stories for children	255
Kindergarten and its importance in education	256
How to choose a suitable daycare/nursery school for your child	259
Teachers' qualifications	259
Location	259
Size.....	260
Building	260
Play rooms and gardens.....	260
Health and psychological services	260
Health and safety concerns	260

Is it the role of the nursery school or kindergarten to teach the child how to read and write?	261
Preparing the child to read and write in kindergarten	262
Preparing the child for reading	262
Parties and trips	263
Dramatic play	263
Telling stories	263
Alphabet games	263
Puppets	264
Preparing children to write	264
Examples of activities that develop the child's skills and help him get ready to write	264
Common childhood illnesses	266
Common cold	266
Precautions to avoid spreading viruses	266
Taking care of a child with a cold	267
When should you call the doctor?	267
Influenza (flu)	268
Is it a cold or flu?	269
Influenza	270
How you can protect yourself and others	270
Diarrhoea and dehydration	271
Most children suffer from occasional bouts of diarrhoea.	271
Causes of diarrhoea	271
Symptoms that may accompany diarrhoea	272
Dehydration	272

Symptoms of dehydration	272
Treating dehydration	273
Preparing 1 (one) Litre solution using Salt, Sugar and Water at Home	273
10 Things you should know about rehydrating a child.	274
Healthy nutrition for your child	275
Infants	275
Older children	275
Prevention of diarrhoea.....	275
The danger of kissing your small child on his mouth.....	277
Food allergies.....	278
Anaphylactic shock	278
What should I do if my toddler seems to be having a severe allergic reaction?.....	279
What can I do for my child who has a food allergy?	280
Foods that children are most commonly allergic to	281
What should I do if my child has an allergy to milk?	281
Treating food allergies	281
Asthma.....	282
Chickenpox.....	283
Poliomyelitis	285
Ways in which polio is transmitted.....	285
Incubation period	286
Symptoms of polio	286
Prevention and treatment	286
Whooping cough (pertussis).....	286

Incubation period	287
Symptoms of whooping cough	287
Most serious complications of whooping cough	287
Measles	288
Incubation period	288
Symptoms of measles	288
Prevention and treatment	289
Rubella (German measles)	289
Incubation period	289
Symptoms of German measles	290
Prevention and treatment	290
Rheumatic fever.....	290
Causes of rheumatic fever	290
Is rheumatic fever a hereditary disease?	291
Is rheumatic fever contagious?	291
Symptoms of rheumatic fever	291
Blood tests for diagnosis of rheumatic fever	291
Prevention and treatment	292
Diphtheria	293
Incubation period	293
Symptoms of diphtheria	293
Complications of diphtheria	294
Prevention and treatment	294
Accident prevention	296
Keeping your child safe from accidents	296

Prevention of poisoning.....	296
The most common substances that could lead to poisoning in children	297
Prevention of choking and suffocation.....	298
Prevention of broken bones and falls from high places	299
Prevention of fire and electric shock.....	300
First Aid for children	301
First Aid for poisoning.....	301
First aid for burns.....	302
First Aid for first and second degree burns.....	303
First Aid for third and fourth degree burns	303
Chemical burns	303
First Aid for breaks and fractures	304
First Aid for near drowning.....	305
First Aid for wounds and bleeding.....	306
First Aid for bites and stings	306
Snake bites.....	307
Insect bites and stings.....	307
First Aid for eye injuries	308

Maternal feelings



This heartfelt emotion that dwells in every corner of my heart, these instinctive feelings that are deeply rooted in me, this compassion and mercy that encompass this infant whose features are not yet even clear, all these feelings will grow in your heart; you will find yourself experiencing new emotions and be filled with love, concern and joy for this little one who has emerged from your body and is now a part of your life.

The instinct of motherhood is that to which the very existence of mankind is connected; were it not for motherhood the human race would have become extinct.

Hence Allah has created us with this emotion and has made these little ones the adornment of our lives. Allah says:

“Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world” [al-Kahf 18:46].



Preparing to welcome the newborn

There are plenty of preparations to be taken care of before the baby arrives. The following is a guide to some of the things you will need to take care of the little newcomer.



Clothing

You will need the following:

- 6 sleep suits
- 6 undershirts (buy the ones that fasten between the baby's legs)
- Bibs
- Socks (if you buy the sleep suits with feet, you may not need socks)
- Coat or "snowsuit" (all-in-one outer garment for cold weather)
- 3-4 sets of clothes for going out
- 2 receiving blankets (small blankets or sheets for swaddling, putting over one's shoulder when burping the baby, etc)
- Buy woolen blankets, especially during the winter.

Pay attention to the time of year the baby will be born when you buy supplies for him, so that you will not buy summer clothes when he is going to be born in the winter or vice versa.

When buying clothing for your baby, make sure that the kind of fabric the clothes are made of will not bother him; some kinds of wool or synthetic fabrics may be uncomfortable and make his skin itch. (Cotton, cotton blends and knit fabrics are most comfortable.)



Hygiene

Buy the following:

- 6-8 packets of diapers, but do not buy too many of one size because the child's size will change
- Sterilised cotton gauze for cleaning the child's bellybutton
- Soap and shampoo suitable for use on newborns
- Cream for diaper rash
- Wet wipes for use on babies
- Plastic bags to put dirty diapers in
- Soft towels to use after giving the baby a bath
- Soft comb and brush
- Special safety scissors for cutting the nails; it is best to buy the type that has rounded ends because this reduces the risk of the child getting hurt.
- Baby bath tub

Feeding

If you want to breastfeed then you may need to buy a pump to extract milk and some sterilised plastic bottles to keep the milk in.

Preparing the baby's bedroom

You will need a bassinet, crib, sheets and blankets. You may also want to buy décor items.

Getting around with the baby

You will need an infant car seat, a pram or stroller, and a baby carrier or sling.

Baby's first cry

The baby's first cry means that the air passages have begun to function properly; any change therein may be indicative of health problems.

The first cry is the signal that the infant's respiratory system has made the switch from getting oxygen via the placenta as he did when he was inside the uterus to getting oxygen from the air. In addition to indicating that the infant's airways are free of blockages, the first cry also indicates that there is no physical defect in the larynx or vocal chords that could affect the child's breathing or the sound of his voice.

How will your newborn look?

If you are giving birth for the first time, you will be surprised at the way your baby looks. He has a large head with no neck, short legs and a large torso. The head of most newborns may appear somewhat misshapen because on average the infant remains squashed in the birth canal for twelve hours. Babies who are born by Caesarean, on the other hand, usually have a better appearance that distinguishes them from their peers, because their heads have not been squeezed in the birth canal.

Do not worry about the soft spot in your child's skull, which is called the fontanelle. This allows the head to be squeezed enough to pass through the birth canal. The rear part of the fontanelle remains for approximately 4 months until it is filled in completely, whereas the front part needs between nine and eighteen months to fill in.

You should also expect a kind of swelling in your child's genitals as a result of the extra dose of female hormones that he received from you just before birth. In addition to his face and eyes being swollen, his lips may be rosy, and his hands and feet may be blue for the first few hours of his life.

Your baby's skin

The infant's skin is covered with a smooth, white, waxy substance called vernix. The role of this substance is to reduce the possibility of the child's body being exposed to skin rashes during the first few days after birth, and the body will slowly absorb it.

Do not worry about the presence of blue spots (known as "Mongolian blue spots") on the skin; these spots have nothing to do with bruises or circulation problems, and they usually appear in children whose skin is somewhat dark. But if the spots are red, that may be the result of some pores not working efficiently or some pressure during birth; these spots will disappear within a week or ten days from birth.

Your baby's hair

When the child is born his hair is soft and dark; this hair will disappear during the first week following birth and other hair will grow in its place.

You may find that there is some light hair covering many parts of your child's body, such as the cheeks, ears, shoulders and back, but this hair will disappear after the fourth month.

Remember that there is no connection between the hair of the newborn at the present moment and what will happen to it in the future. It is said that infants who are bald usually turn out to be blond whereas hair that is blond at birth usually turns dark. Your child may be completely bald when he is born, and you may not be able to tell at that stage what colour his hair is, until a later stage.

Your baby's eyes

The eyes may appear swollen after birth.

That is because of pressure during birth, but this symptom will quickly disappear.

The eyes may secrete a yellowish substance which results from blockage of the tear duct or a minor infection in the eye; this problem may be treated with drops prescribed by the doctor.

Eye color

The colour of the infant's eyes does not become clear until he is at least a few months old. The eyes do not remain the same colour as they are in the first moments after birth because as the child develops, his body begins to produce a pigment called melanin. It is also possible for a child to be born with eyes of different colours, although this is rare.

Your baby's mouth and nose

It is normal for the baby's nose to be blocked, so do not resort to using nose drops to clear this blockage or using anything else without first consulting a doctor.

The baby's tongue may be white, which is something natural because the infant relies on milk as his only source of nourishment. But if some white spots appear on a pink tongue, this may be indicative of thrush (overgrowth of a yeast called candida in the baby's mouth). Your doctor will be able to advise you of appropriate treatment.

Jaundice

Jaundice affects a large number of newborns, causing yellowness in the skin and eyes. This happens as a result of elevated levels of bilirubin in the blood. Bilirubin is a normal pigment made when red blood cells break down. It is usually processed by the liver and eliminated in the stool. In jaundice, the body is making too much bilirubin or the liver is not able to get rid of it quickly.

Jaundice usually appears in the first few days after birth.

Types of jaundice

Physiological jaundice

- In this case the yellowness will disappear quickly and automatically during the first week after birth; however it may last up to 2 weeks in premature infants

Pathological jaundice

- If the jaundice lasts for more than two weeks, that is indicative of some pathological problem (illness) and must be investigated further.

Causes of jaundice

1. Immaturity of the baby's liver which is unable to get rid of the excess bilirubin in the blood.
2. Overproduction of bilirubin in the newborn which leads to the appearance of the yellow colour on the skin. This yellow colour first appears on the infant's face then spreads downwards until it reaches the chest, then the stomach, then finally the feet.
3. Septicaemia ("blood poisoning") resulting from the presence of pathogenic organisms in the bloodstream.
4. Incompatibility between the mother's blood and the blood of the foetus (Rh or ABO problems).



Treatment for jaundice

A test will be carried out to determine the level of bilirubin in the blood. If it is high, the infant will be treated with phototherapy (exposure to lights) which will turn the bilirubin into a non-harmful substance that will be expelled in the urine. If the test shows that the bilirubin is low, then the yellowness will disappear on its own without any treatment within one or two weeks.

Vaccinations

Most countries have vaccination schedules, a series of vaccinations given at certain stages in a child's life, starting from birth. This is compulsory in some countries, and recommended in others. The following table lists some of the most important vaccinations:

Age at vaccination	Vaccine
At birth	Tuberculosis (TB) Hepatitis B
At 2 months	Poliomyelitis (polio) Hepatitis B DPT (diphtheria, <u>pertussis</u> (whooping cough) and tetanus) Pneumococcal
At 4 months	Poliomyelitis (polio) Hepatitis B DPT (diphtheria, <u>pertussis</u> (whooping cough) and tetanus) Pneumococcal
At 6 months	Poliomyelitis (polio) Hepatitis B DPT (diphtheria, <u>pertussis</u> (whooping cough) and tetanus) Pneumococcal
At 12 months	Poliomyelitis (polio)

At 18 months

Poliomyelitis (polio)

DPT (diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus)

Pneumococcal

Hepatitis A

At 24 months

Hepatitis A

At 4-6 years

Poliomyelitis (polio)

DPT (diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus)

MMR (Measles, mumps, rubella)

Varicella (chicken pox)

Islamic rulings concerning the newborn



Giving glad tidings

It is mustahabb (“recommended”) to give glad tidings because Allah (st) says:

“But We gave her glad tidings of Ishâq (Isaac), and after Ishâq, of Ya’qûb (Jacob)” [Hood 11:71].

Reciting the adhaan and iqamah into the baby’s ears

It is mustahabb to recite the adhaan (“call to prayer”) into the baby’s right ear and the iqamah (second call to prayer) into his left ear, because of the hadeeth of Abu Raafi’ who said: I saw the

Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) recite the call to prayer into the ear of al-Hasan ibn 'Ali when his mother Faatimah bore him.

Tahneek

Tahneek means chewing a date then rubbing the infant's palate with it, because of the hadeeth in al-Saheehayn narrated by Abu Moosa (R.A) who said: A boy was born to me; I brought him to the Prophet (S.A.W) who named him Ibraaheem and rubbed his palate with a (chewed) date and prayed for blessing for him. Al-Bukhaari added: And he prayed for blessing for him.

Shaving the child's head and giving the weight of the hair in silver in charity

Because the Prophet (S.A.W) said to Faatimah, when she gave birth to al-Hasan: "Shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver in charity to the poor."

Naming the infant

It is permissible to name him on the first day, or on the third day, up the seventh day, because the Prophet (S.A.W) said: "A boy was born to me last night and I have named him after my father Ibraaheem." The parents have to choose a good name for their newborn.

Rulings on 'aqeeqah

The 'aqeeqah is the sacrifice that is offered on behalf of the newborn on the seventh day after birth.

It is a confirmed Sunnah (Sunnah mu'akkadah) because of the words and actions of the Prophet (S.A.W). With regard to his words, it was narrated by al-Bukhaari in his Saheeh that Salmaan al-Dabbi said: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "When a child is born, 'aqeeqah should be offered, so shed blood on his behalf and remove the dirt from him."

With regard to his actions, in the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas it says that the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) offered 'aqeeqah on behalf of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, one ram for each. And the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "Every child is held in pledge for his 'aqeeqah which should be sacrificed on his behalf on the seventh day, when he should be given his name and his head should be shaved."

Timing of the 'aqeeqah

Imam Ahmad said: (The 'aqeeqah) should be sacrificed on the seventh day; if it is not done then, it should be done on the fourteenth day; and if it is not done then, it should be done on the twenty-first day.

How it is done

Two sheep should be offered as 'aqeeqah for a boy and one sheep for a girl, because of the hadeeth of 'Aa'ishah (R.A) who said: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "Two similar sheep for a boy and one sheep for a girl."

According to another report: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) instructed us to offer 'aqeeqah, for a girl one sheep and for a boy two sheep. What is meant by "similar" is that they should be equal in age, type, gender and fatness. One matter to which attention must be paid when offering 'aqeeqah for the newborn is that no bone of the animal should be broken, whether when distributing it or when eating it, because of the report narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad from his father, and also from 'Aa'ishah, according to which the Prophet (S.A.W) said concerning the 'aqeeqah offered by Faatimah on behalf of al-Hasan and al-Husayn: "Let them send a leg to the midwife, and eat and give to others, but do not break any bone of it." And he used to say: "Cut it into portions but do not break any bone." Portions here means limbs.

Conditions of the sacrifice

The conditions for the 'aqeeqah sacrifice are the same as those for the udhiyah sacrifice. These conditions are:

- It should be over one year old if it is a sheep or goat; in the case of a sheep, if it is fat it may be six months old, so long as it cannot be told apart from one that is one year old. In the case of goats, the condition that it be over one year old is essential.
- It should be free from defects. So it is not valid to slaughter an animal that is blind, one-eyed, emaciated or lame and unable to walk to slaughter. It is also not permissible to slaughter one that has lost its teeth, or one that has no ear because it was born that way, or one that is so crazy that it cannot even graze, or one that has had its tail or buttock cut off if more than one third of it has gone. As for minor defects, it is permissible to slaughter such animals although it is better that the animal be free of all defects.
- It is not valid to have others sharing in this sacrifice because in this case the blood is shed on behalf of the child; it is like a ransom for him.
- It is permissible to slaughter a camel or a cow, on condition that it be on behalf of one child.
- In the case of 'aqeeqah it is permissible to give away some of the meat, to give some to charity and to eat some, so as to spread the love among the members of society.

Circumcision of males

Circumcision is a very ancient custom among many peoples, and was known among the Pharaohs and the Arabs before Islam.

The West used to regard circumcision of males as an Arab custom and tradition and they thought that there was no benefit in following that tradition until new research highlighted the importance of circumcision in reducing the risk of contracting many venereal diseases. In 2007 CE the World Health

Organisation officially confirmed that circumcision is regarded as a means of protection against AIDS. A number of other studies carried out in South Africa have also confirmed that circumcised men are at less risk of contracting venereal diseases than those who are not circumcised.

Circumcision from an Islamic point of view

More than fourteen hundred years before Western scientists realized the importance of circumcision, Islam affirmed the importance of this practice and the Prophet (S.A.W) described it as part of the fitrah (“sound innate disposition”).

Many scholars and imams, including Imam Maalik, al-Shaafa’i, Ahmad and others, are of the view that circumcision is obligatory for males, and they have their evidence for that which is regarded as more sound by contemporary scholars.

Another group of scholars, including Imam Hasan al-Basri and Imam Abu Haneefah, are of the view that circumcision of males is Sunnah, and they have their evidence for that.

Benefits of male circumcision

1. It reduces the risk of circumcised males contracting infections of the urinary tract during childhood.
2. It reduces the possibility of the partners of circumcised males contracting cervical cancer compared to the partners of uncircumcised males.
3. It reduces the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.

What is the best time for circumcision?

The best time for circumcision is the first few days after birth, so that when the child reaches the age of discernment he will find himself circumcised and the matter is finished with.

Female circumcision

Circumcision of females is a matter concerning which the fuqaha' ("jurists") and doctors differed, but many fuqaha' regarded circumcision as an honour for the female. With regard to doctors, they differed concerning female circumcision. Many doctors feel that circumcision of the female is a kind of mutilation and that it undermines her rights. Some of them think that the importance of female circumcision is different for people in the East and people in the West, each according to their own nature, and for each opinion there is evidence for its soundness. There are also those who say that it is essential to circumcise females, and they quote as evidence the report according to which the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) said: "When the two circumcised parts meet, ghusl ("ritual bath") becomes obligatory."

This difference of opinion has provoked a great deal of controversy and the subject of female circumcision has become, as it were, one of the major issues of our time. This is not meant to undermine the importance of this matter, but it has to be put in perspective and discussed within the correct shar'i (Islamic legislation), social and medical context.



Care of the mother after birth

Physical changes in the mother immediately after birth

Immediately after birth, you will enter a stage known as nifaas; this stage lasts for approximately 40 days, during which the mother goes through a number of physiological changes which, by the end of this stage, lead to the body of the woman and her reproductive organs going back to their pre-pregnancy state. These changes include the following:

Slight increase in body temperature

This is something natural that results from the great muscular effort expended during birth, especially for mothers who are giving birth for the first time. This heightened temperature usually lasts for twenty-four hours; if it lasts longer than that,

there may be some vascular congestion in the breasts or blood in the uterus as a result of the uterus not being properly cleaned out, or it may be the result of puerperal fever (also known as puerperal infection).

Slower than normal heartbeat

This is also something natural that happens after birth and lasts for approximately two or three days. But if the heartbeat becomes more rapid after giving birth, that may be the result of a haemorrhage or heart disease. So if there is a rise in the heart rate, you have to consult your obstetrician.

Difficulty in urinating and defecating

These problems may be the result of soreness following the birth or stitches in the case of an episiotomy or tear, which may make urination somewhat painful, or it may be the result of the muscles of the urethra becoming looser due to pressure of the foetus on this area before and during childbirth. With regard to wounds and small tears, they will heal quickly.

Changes in the uterus

The uterus rapidly grows smaller and shrinks in order to go back to its normal size and place. This shrinking may be accompanied by some pain, especially after a second or subsequent birth; this pain is similar to labour pains and that shrinking or contraction leads to the expulsion of any remnants of pregnancy, which refers to a mixture of blood and any membrane that may be left. This usually happens whilst breastfeeding, as it leads to the secretion of hormones that stimulate the uterus to contract and shrink.

Breastfeeding helps to speed up the return of the uterus to its normal, pre-pregnancy size and to go back to the same weight as it was before pregnancy within six weeks from birth, because breastfeeding stimulates the breasts and hence the pituitary

gland to secrete two hormones, prolactin and oxytocin, which help the uterus to contract.

Vaginal discharge (lochia)

The colour of this discharge is dark red during the first week, turning to yellow in the second week and then white during the third week. Most of the discharge is produced during the first week of nifaas.

Your stomach may be flabby and not firm

And your waist circumference may not have settled yet, because you have not yet lost all the weight that was accumulated during pregnancy. You may also continue to experience back pain and haemorrhoids, and stretchmarks may appear on your chest, stomach and thighs, especially if you gained a lot of weight quickly during pregnancy.

If you have undergone a caesarean section

You will feel pain and will experience difficulty in sitting, getting out of bed, standing up straight or walking. With regard to wounds and small tears, they will heal quickly.

Essential care of the mother after childbirth

1. Keep the number of visitors low so that the mother will not be exposed to the risk of catching a cold or any other communicable diseases.
2. The mother should take a warm bath immediately after giving birth if the weather is warm.
3. Rest is essential. The mother should rest in bed during the first few days after birth, then during the second week she can gradually begin to move for short periods and then go back to bed. During the third week she may do some small tasks that do not take a lot of energy.

4. Marital relations are not allowed at all for forty days, so that the mother will not be exposed to any contamination and no germs will enter the uterus.

5. Attention must be paid to nutrition in order to replace blood that was lost during birth and also to increase milk production. Hence, she must eat a balanced diet that includes all the essential elements of nutrition needed by the mother during that stage, such as animal protein, liquids, vitamins, minerals and foods that give energy. She should also avoid eating foods that cause bloating (garlic, onions and leeks).

6. She should consult the doctor to make sure that all is well during the nifaas period and that everything is going back to the way it was before pregnancy.

Taking care of the mother after a Caesarean



The mother who has given birth by Caesarean needs more care and complete rest during the first few days after the Caesarean operation.

- In the first twenty-four hours after the Caesarean, the mother may feel somewhat dizzy and out of breath when walking or moving; she has to move and walk during this period but she should move slowly.
- The mother will also need to use some painkillers when she feels any pain after the Caesarean, so she should ask the doctor to prescribe suitable painkillers for her that will not affect breastfeeding.

The mother's stay in hospital will vary between three and five days so long as there are no complications.

You will have to pay attention to some matters after leaving the hospital and going home, including the following:

- Make sure that you rest and do not do any hard work or lift any heavy items.
- You should only carry your baby and breastfeed him, and rest in bed as much as possible.
- It is advisable to take some vitamins to help replace the blood that was lost during childbirth. This should be done under the supervision of a doctor.
- Drink a lot of fluids, as much as possible, and make sure that you eat nutritious and healthy meals that are rich in vitamins.
- Keep checking the site of the wound and tell the doctor immediately if you notice any unfamiliar changes.

Some restrictions that the mother should follow after giving birth by Caesarean:

- Limit stair-climbing as much as possible
- Avoid marital relations until after consulting the doctor

- Do not lift anything heavier than your baby for the first two weeks
- Avoid using vaginal douches
- Ask the nurse or a relative to help you with laundry, cleaning and other tasks that require you to bend and stand up; such activities should be kept to a minimum during the first few weeks after birth
- Avoid driving for the first two weeks after birth
- Avoid climbing stairs frequently
- Avoid exercising until after consulting a doctor

Do I have to take a bath after giving birth?

Yes, you have to take a warm bath immediately after giving birth, with the help of one of your relatives or the nurses in the hospital, if suitable facilities are available in the hospital: the place should be warm and not chilly, so that you will not catch a cold.

How many sanitary pads will I need after giving birth?

If you are going to give birth in the hospital, the nurses will provide you with a small cover for the bed which can be used once and then thrown away if anything leaks onto it.

If you are going to give birth at home, you will need a protective cover for the bed to keep your mattress clean.

You will also need a number of sanitary pads because in the beginning, following the birth, you will be surprised at the amount of blood that will come from your uterus. On the first day three quarters of the total amount that is supposed to come out will come out, and on the two following days the last quarter of the amount will come. Hence on the first day you will need to

change the pad every two hours, then every 3-4 hours. So buy at least two or three boxes of 12 pads for now.

Note:

- Buy the kind of sanitary pads that are designed specifically for use after childbirth (“maternity” pads) because they are longer, softer and more absorbent compared to ordinary sanitary pads.
- Remember to wash your hands before and after changing the pad.

After the first few days following the birth, the rate of bleeding will decrease and the colour will change from deep red to pink, and the consistency will become more liquid. Then in the second and third weeks the colour will turn to brown. If you are breastfeeding you may notice that the flow of blood increases after breastfeeding your baby, because breastfeeding causes contractions in the uterus which expel the blood from it. The flow of blood may also increase slightly if you are busy and do not have enough time to rest.

At the end of the first week you will be able to use regular pads that adhere to the inside of your underwear. In the fourth week you may be able to simply use panty liners.

When will monthly periods resume after giving birth?

The cessation of menstruation varies from one woman to another, according to differences in choice of breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, and other circumstances.

Mothers who breastfeed may find that the return of the monthly periods may be delayed as long as they continue to breastfeed regularly, and in some cases it may be as long as between six and twelve months before periods resume, because the hormone LTH [luteotropic hormone, also known as prolactin, which plays an important role in milk production] suppresses secretion of the hormones FSH and LH [follicle stimulating hormone and

luteinizing hormone] in the pituitary gland; these two hormones are responsible for development of the follicle and hence ovulation. Before her period comes back, the mother may feel menstrual pain. It may be noted that the more frequently she breastfeeds the longer it will take for her monthly period to return.

Mothers who bottle-feed their babies will find that the monthly periods will cease for between one and three months after giving birth, then menstruation will resume. (It is possible to become pregnant before getting your period after having given birth.)

Marital relations after giving birth

You have to refrain completely from marital relations for no less than forty days and possibly longer, so that the womb will not become infected.

Is it possible to take birth control pills whilst breastfeeding?

It is preferable to use another means of contraception because birth control pills reduce the production of milk and during this period milk is the only source of nutrition for the baby.

Breastfeeding and your figure

There is a prevalent belief among many mothers, especially new mothers, that breastfeeding has a negative effect on their appearance and figure, and that it will make the woman gain weight and cause her breasts to become flabby.

But in fact the opposite is true, because breastfeeding causes contractions in the uterus and stops bleeding, and helps the uterus to go back to its normal size, which in turn helps the size of the belly to reduce and go back to its normal size. By the same token, breastfeeding helps to get rid of fat that has accumulated in the woman's body during pregnancy, which will lead to the woman regaining her figure.

What is the best way to lose weight after giving birth?

There are many mothers who want to get rid of excess weight immediately after giving birth, but the period immediately after giving birth is not the appropriate time to lose weight, especially if you want to breastfeed. If a lactating mother's diet is inadequate in any way, it is unlikely to affect her milk (except in the most extreme cases); the body will still produce milk for the baby, but the mother's energy level will drop and she may develop anaemia.

The nursing mother needs approximately 200 calories per day in addition to what she needed during pregnancy, so as to ensure sufficient milk supply for her baby and meet her own nutritional needs.

Maintaining your weight

Although in most cases it is inadvisable for a new mother to try to lose weight, she can take measures to keep her weight steady and not gain weight. Maintaining weight can be done by means of the following:

Light exercise

Light exercise, such as jogging, swimming and so on, will help strengthen the abdomen and pelvic muscles. We advise you to exercise for 15 to 30 minutes at least, including exercises aimed at tightening or strengthening those muscles that have been affected more than others because of pregnancy. Do this three or five times a week at least.

If you did not do any exercise during your pregnancy, start exercising for 15 minutes at a time only, then increasing gradually until you get to 30 min. But if you reduced the frequency of exercise as your pregnancy advanced, then start at the level at which you stopped and then increase the level and duration of

exercise when you feel you are ready. If you feel any pain, consult your doctor.

Developing eating habits that will help maintain your weight and guarantee good health

Dr. Judy Mazel says in her book that was recently published in the United States under the title *Ideal Eating Habits, Better than Dieting*: It is not only increased amounts of food that cause you to gain weight; rather it is the wrong way of eating... Dr. Mazel affirms that some kinds of food interact with one another and become slowly absorbed, hence they turn into fat in the body. Some other kinds of food are quickly absorbed after interacting with one another, so they do not accumulate as fat and thus your body becomes energetic and slender. This will give you more zest for life. There is nothing more difficult for a woman than being heavy and slow as a result of accumulation of fat which then leads her to become inclined to lethargy.

Eating breakfast, the most important meal of the day

So start your day with it and it will help you to lose weight. When you eat breakfast it stimulates the body to burn calories. In the morning you can eat cornflakes to which iron and vitamins have been added and do not forget to drink no less than 8 to 10 cups of water per day.

Starting your lunch with vegetable soup

Then eat a lot of salad, and after that you can eat whatever you want but in small amounts.

Not eating fats

Fats, whether they are vegetable oil, ghee, or butter, are to be avoided. Do not eat fried foods, not only because they contain a lot of calories but because they are also unhealthy.

A lot of women lose weight just from breastfeeding, but this is not the case for all women, so do not expect to lose weight quickly. Regard the first year after birth as the time that is needed to go back to your normal weight safely. Most famous women who you read about losing weight in six months do not pay attention to their own health or the health of their children.

Proper diet for a woman after giving birth

- Eat moderate amounts of food
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, both fresh and boiled, because they prevent hunger and are not high in calories. After that you can eat whatever foods you like, in small amounts.
- Try to drink a lot of fluids, equivalent to between eight and 12 cups of water every day. This step will help you to produce the amount of milk that your baby needs. Most mothers feel thirsty when they start to breastfeed, so it is a good idea to keep a cup of water beside you every time you feed your baby.
- Avoid eating a lot of proteins and carbohydrates in one meal, such as potatoes with steak or pasta with cheese. Instead of that you can eat potatoes with a plate of green salad in one meal, and you can eat steak with soup in another meal. There is no reason not to eat yoghurt with both meals.
- Always avoid ketchup and sauces; you can replace them with some herbs and a little butter or olive oil.
- Do not deprive yourself of foods that you like a great deal, but do not eat a large amount of them; you can just have a taste of such foods when you feel a craving for them, because if you refrain completely from eating things that you like and want, you

may succeed for a little while but eventually you will reach a point where you lose control and will consume a large amount of it. So moderation is the key.

- Avoid consuming a lot of caffeine and other harmful substances, because they may be passed to your milk through your blood. The same may be said concerning nicotine, which should be avoided completely.
- If you go to extremes in eating ice cream or pizza or any kind of food that is rich in fat and cream, the next day you should limit yourself to eating yoghurt and fruit.
- By the same token, if you eat a great deal of meat and sweets on one day, you have to eat fruits on the following day.
- Give priority to vegetables and fresh fruits, but if you eat a meal that is rich in protein and carbohydrates, do not eat a lot of vegetables and fruits with it, so as to prevent indigestion.
- When you eat chicken or any other kind of fowl, remove the skin before cooking because it contains a large amount of fat.
- Avoid dressings on salads, because they increase the appetite as well as being unhealthy. When you boil vegetables, use less water so that the vegetables will not lose their vitamin and mineral content.
- Eat a lot of meals that are rich in iron and calcium, because your body needs them during this period.

Postnatal exercises and the importance thereof

Exercise has many benefits and helps with the following:

- Improving mood by increasing levels of chemicals in the brain that are responsible for giving the body the feeling of good health (such as endorphins).

- Going back to the weight you were before pregnancy and childbirth, and getting rid of excess weight.
- Protection against pain by giving you more energy if you feel tired.
- Increasing physical strength and endurance which will make it easier for you to take care of your new baby.
- Some research has shown that regular exercise can help reduce the risk of postnatal depression.

Types of exercise that are not recommended during the first few weeks after giving birth

- Do not go swimming until seven days have passed since the bleeding or any other vaginal discharge (lochia) has stopped.
- If you gave birth by Caesarean, you have to wait until you have a check-up six weeks after giving birth; at that time you can ask your doctor about what kinds of exercise you can do.

Advice to the new mother

Do not go to extremes in exercising because you may feel very eager to exercise in the first few days, but then reality will hit you when you feel the symptoms of postnatal depression or you lose all your strength. Try to do a little exercise, then have some rest. If you feel any pain or any problem in controlling your bladder (urinary incontinence) whilst exercising, speak to your doctor, who may refer you to a specialist.

Exercises to regain your figure

Exercises to strengthen the abdominal muscles

Pelvic exercises

Pelvic floor exercises

These exercises are known as Kegel exercises. They do not only prepare the muscles of the pelvic floor for labour and delivery, but for the rest of your life too.

These exercises involve contracting and relaxing the muscles of the pelvic floor as if you are trying to stop yourself from urinating partway through. If these muscles are neglected and become weak, that will lead to poor bladder control and urinary incontinence when doing some activities such as running or walking, or even when laughing or coughing.

Pelvic lift

This exercise is beneficial because it moves your back and stretches it gently. It also exercises the abdominal muscles, which helps to reduce back pain. You can do the pelvic lift exercises whilst lying on your back or when sitting or using an exercise ball.

Whilst lying on your back:

1. Lie on the ground or on the bed and put a pillow beneath your head. Bend your knees and draw your feet close to your posterior.
2. Tighten the pelvic floor muscles and pull your lower abdominal muscles ("abs") inwards, then press your lower back into the floor or bed. Remain in this position for a count of three, then lift your back off the floor or bed. Repeat this exercise ten times, trying not to hold your breath whilst doing it.

Whilst sitting:

1. Sit on a straight-backed chair or a chair with no back, with your feet placed firmly on the ground.

2. Tighten your pelvic floor muscles and hold for a count of ten, then relax for a count of ten. Repeat this ten times. Aim to do three sets of ten per day,

Using an exercise ball:

1. Sit on the exercise ball with your feet on the ground. It is better to put the ball on a mat so that the ball will not slip away from you.

2. Move the ball forwards and backwards by using your posterior, letting the pelvis move with it; this is done by keeping the shoulders still. You can also move the ball from side to side to exercise your waist muscles.

Your figure and girdles

Many women who are looking to regain their figures and who do not have much time or want to take shortcuts do not want to put in the effort it takes to exercise in order to regain their figures, so they resort, without thinking, to using girdles or corsets as a trick to hide the problems suffered by most eastern women in the abdominal and rear areas, without realising the negative consequences that they will suffer later on.

Girdles, corsets and the like, as Dr. Medhat ash-Shaami, a consultant in general health and nutrition, says, have some benefits in certain cases that should be determined by the doctor only, such as prolapsed kidneys or weakness in the abdominal muscles after surgery. But the girdle that is used in such cases is usually made of soft leather with a lining and is custom-made to fit the patient's body. But in these cases, the girdle is not enough without doing some specific, gentle exercise such as walking and doing some abdominal exercises by lifting the legs whilst lying on one's back to strengthen the abdominal muscles.

The woman who wears the girdle should pay attention to its negative consequences: the muscles of the abdominal wall may become weak because they are completely carried by the girdle or corset. So the outcome will be that the skin will become flabby. It also prevents the evaporation of sweat from this part of the body, so the woman may become more vulnerable to skin rashes or skin diseases. She also becomes more vulnerable to accumulation of fat in the area of the stomach that is compressed by the girdle, because fat accumulates in areas where there is little movement and no fat is burned.

This has to do with the general shape of the body, let alone the risk of indigestion because of the pressure of the girdle on the abdomen which hinders the activity of the intestines. In some cases constipation may occur because the muscles of the intestines are unable to move; there may also be some problems with the circulation of blood, which stagnates in the area of the abdomen; this in turn may lead to the appearance of blue lines because of the pressure on the veins. Hence, you should not resort to shortcuts; instead make the effort to always be fit.

Emotional care of the mother after giving birth

Taking care of the mother's emotional and psychological well-being after giving birth is no less important than taking care of her physical well-being. That is because after giving birth the mother will feel a number of things that may affect her psyche if she does not receive emotional and moral support. She realises that her responsibilities have increased; after having been responsible for people such as her father before marriage and her husband after marriage, now she has become completely responsible for the newcomer, for his nutrition, breastfeeding him, clothing him, loving him and meeting all his wishes, in addition to her responsibilities towards her husband and other children, if applicable. And that may be in addition to her work outside the house. Many women also believe that they have bid

farewell to their beauty and their figure after giving birth, because of gaining weight and other changes, and they think that they can never go back to doing the activities that they enjoyed before giving birth because they are busy all the time with their children and other responsibilities.

All of these are things that may affect the mother's psychology after giving birth. Hence, she needs to adapt to the new situation so that she will be able to take care of her baby and her husband, and be able to fulfil all her responsibilities successfully. The one who is best able to offer emotional support to the mother after giving birth is her husband, by understanding the extent of what she is suffering of exhaustion and psychological and physical pain. So he should keep her away from any tension and create an atmosphere of love and compassion, and he should help his wife and try to make her happy, and encourage her as much as he can because all of that will make this new mother happy and help her to get through this stage safely and adapt quickly to the new situation.

Enjoy your child and overcome any feelings of distress or depression

Some mothers, especially new mothers, may experience feelings of distress and depression after they begin to care for their baby. A mother may think that her baby is sick just because he cries a great deal; another mother may think that her husband does not want to share the responsibility of caring for the child with her; another may think that her husband has grown apart from her because she has lost whatever beauty and attractiveness she had before pregnancy. In addition to that, a woman may feel that her new responsibility is too great, namely the responsibility of looking after the house and all that it involves, and her responsibility towards her husband and trying to please him, and her responsibility towards the new baby. The physiological changes that happen in the woman's body after giving birth also

play a large role in reinforcing these feelings. These feelings are known as postnatal depression.

If you start to experience any of these feelings, then you have to hasten to fight these feelings and overcome them, because overcoming the feeling of distress will not benefit you only; rather it will also benefit your child and your husband. Remember that just as you may think that your husband does not want to shoulder any responsibility, he may also feel neglected after his wife has begun to give all her time and attention to the baby. Remember too that this baby in your lap is one of the greatest blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you. There are many women for whom Allah has decreed that they should not have children for reasons that may affect them or their husbands, and they wish that they could spend every penny they have in return for being blessed with a child.

Try to enjoy your child by playing with him and talking to him; when you see his first smile or hear his first word, or you hear him say “mama” for the first time, you will not be able to contain your joy and you will be filled with love for your child and everyone around him. This happiness will be reflected in your husband as well. All you have to do is get through this period and try to enjoy it and adapt to the circumstances; this period does not last for long.

You can also start doing something that you love, such as writing, drawing, sewing, exercising or anything else that make you feel content and raises your morale.

Try to get in touch with other full-time mothers, for they are most likely to understand your needs because you will have something in common with them. This contact may lessen your feelings of loneliness, because you are not the only one in this world who is going through this stage.

Talk to your husband about your feeling lonely so that he can help you overcome this feeling. He can stay with your children to

look after them when you go out for a walk or to do some shopping.

Think about doing some charity work and help those who are less fortunate than yourself. This will enable you to do something that interests you whilst at the same time benefiting others. If you are a full-time mother, try to make time for yourself every day no matter what the circumstances. You should have some time on your own to do something for yourself.

Going back to work

Many women express a desire to go back to work early, three months or more or less after the child is born. This may be due to a number of reasons including the following:

- The woman may hope to advance in her career and she does not want to miss any opportunity; if she stays at home with her child it may take her much longer to advance in her career.
- She may not want to rely financially on her husband, and she may need to know that she has the financial independence and is able to stand on her own two feet if she has to.

The new mother faces a difficult choice when she has to decide between the two issues: delaying a career and spending time with her new family or pursuing professional dreams, because most bosses think that you will not be qualified for future promotion unless you are committed to carrying on working.

When is the right time to go back to work?

Only one person can answer this question and that is you. The decision concerning this matter depends on a number of factors; in order to be able to answer this question you first have to answer the following:

- How is your child's health? Are there any health problems to be borne in mind?

- Is there someone like the child's grandmother or a neighbour with motherly experience whom you can trust, or is there a daycare you can trust to look after your child and that specialises in dealing with children of the same age as your child? If you find one, you are very lucky!
- Do the circumstances of your work make it a must for you to return quickly or can you take a long leave of absence until you are sure about your child?
- How ready are you now to strike the balance between your work outside the home and your duties inside the home?

Now you are in a position to answer this question: is this the right time for you to go back to work?

Taking care of your baby from birth to 3 months



Taking care of baby

Now you are a mother to this new baby, and now begins a new stage of increased responsibility, both towards your baby and towards your family. This responsibility requires you to display innovative thinking and smartness so that you can raise this child and help him to be a successful, balanced and smart individual. This is not something easy.

This aim has to be given priority over everything else in the mother's life. You have to accept your child with love and joy. As much time, effort, care and love as you give to this child, you will find happiness and the warmth of maternal feelings towards him. Hence you need some initial advice on how to care for this baby so that he will become a distinct individual as you want him to be. Below, I will give you some advice and information that will help you to make your child happy.

Feeding your baby

Breastfeeding

The mother's milk is the ideal food for the infant; it is a treasure that Allah has placed in the breasts of the woman. Natural breast milk gives your child a healthy start in life; it gives him an ideal mixture of nutrients that he needs, in a unique combination that is suited to his digestive system and growing body. It is not only nourishment for your child; when you hold your child to your breast as you breastfeed him, you are creating a loving relationship between you and your child, based on touch and smell, and gazing at one another.

Despite the role that modern science has played in improving bottle milk, it has not and never will reach the level of natural mother's milk, because the nutrients in mother's milk cannot be replaced by bottle milk. The benefits of breast milk are not only physical; they are also emotional.

Benefits and advantages of breastfeeding

1. Children who are breastfed are at less risk from contagious diseases than children who are bottle-fed, because mother's milk contains antibodies that help to protect the infant against serious problems such as diarrhea, other stomach diseases and some childhood cancers.
2. The mother's milk gives a sense of comfort, happiness and psychological stability which the mother feels as a result of the strong bond with her child and fulfillment of her natural role.
3. Mothers who breastfeed find that the return of their menstrual periods is delayed, and this helps to create a space between births.
4. There are fewer cases of urinary tract infections, ear infections and other kinds of infections among children who are breastfed,

unlike those who are bottle-fed; they are five times more likely to suffer these infections than children who are breastfed.

5. Breastfeeding places the child at less risk of obesity than one who was bottle fed.

6. Breastfeeding may help the mother to get rid of the excess weight that was accumulated during pregnancy.

7. Breastfeeding helps to create a bond between mother and child and make the child feel a strong emotional attachment to his mother as a result of the warmth, security and love that his mother gives him whilst breastfeeding.

8. Mother's milk is stored safely and at the right temperature, which is close to body temperature, far away from any contaminants, and it reaches the child's mouth in easily-swallowed amounts.

9. Studies that were carried out on a number of mothers have shown that breastfeeding helps to restore the uterus to its normal position and size quickly. The child's sucking at the breast stimulates the sensitive cells of the nipple which sends a message to the pituitary gland, which then produces the hormone oxytocin which causes the uterus to contract and go back to its normal size.

10. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of ovarian and breast cancer before menopause.

11. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of developing osteoporosis.

12. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of the mother developing gestational diabetes, which may develop into type II diabetes.

13. Breast milk is always available at the right temperature, and it is clean, fresh and safe. It is the only food that your baby needs in the first few months of life.

14. Mother's milk is available at any time and it is free and does not cost anything. It also saves time and effort because you do not need to prepare milk and sterilise bottles.

The first feeding

We advise the new mother to breastfeed her baby as soon as possible after birth, because there are many benefits in doing so. One of these benefits is that the milk that is secreted by the mother's breast after birth, which is called colostrum, is full of protein, vitamins and minerals, especially potassium and sodium chloride. It also contains less fat. Colostrum also contains antibodies which the child did not acquire when he was still in his mother's womb. The colostrum also contains digestive enzymes that are suited to the stomach of the newborn in his first few days.

Another of the benefits of breastfeeding straight away is that it helps the uterus to contract and prevents haemorrhage after giving birth.

Advice for the first days of breastfeeding

Do not worry about the small amounts of milk that you are producing from your breasts during the first few days after birth, because the newborn infant does not need a lot of fluid as he is born with reserves of water. What he actually needs is the protein and antibodies that are in the colostrum.

Does my baby need water?

In fact the infant under the age of six months does not need water, because he gets enough water from his mother's milk. The amount of water in breastmilk, or even in baby formula, is usually no less than 880 ml per litre which is ideal.

Moreover, before the age of six months the baby's immune system is not mature enough to fight any contamination that may be present in water, even if the contamination is minor.

Dr Jennifer Anders, a specialist in emergency paediatric medicine, says:

The infant's liver is not yet mature, hence giving babies a lot of water causes their bodies to expel sodium with the urine, and loss of sodium may affect brain activity; hence early symptoms of water intoxication (also known as hyper-hydration) may include hot temper, laziness and other changes in the brain.

But if a great deal of water is lost from the infant's body for any reason, such as diarrhoea, vomiting, or excessive sweating as a result of intense heat especially in countries where it is very hot in the summer, then the physiological balance between water inside the body and water outside the body is disturbed, and this leads to dehydration in the infant's body, which can only be controlled in one of two ways:

- Either stopping whatever is leading to dehydration
- Or increasing the amount of water entering the child's body by giving him more sterilised water in between regular breastfeedings.

Correct position for breastfeeding

You have to make sure that the position of your baby whilst breastfeeding is correct, so that you can avoid nipple pain and help the milk to flow from your breast.

Note: before starting to breastfeed, you should have some small pillows next to you because you may need them to support your baby when breastfeeding.

Latching on

- Bring your baby close to your breast; do not bring your breast close to your baby. Wait until the baby opens his mouth wide; if he opens it only part way, you can touch his upper lip with your nipple, which will help him to open his mouth wide.
- The baby should take the whole areola (the darker area around the nipple) into his mouth.

- You may need to place a finger on your breast to keep it away from the baby's nose a little.

Signs that the baby has latched on to the nipple in the proper way:

1. His lower lip is folded back beneath your nipple.
2. The baby's ears are moving whilst he is breastfeeding.
3. There is no pain in your nipple, or there is a slight pain but it is minimal.

If you feel that your baby has not latched on to the nipple properly, move him and then offer the breast to him again in the proper manner.

When you want to remove your nipple from the baby's mouth, you can put your little finger in the corner of his mouth to make him open his mouth a little, then you can remove your nipple.

How to breastfeed whilst lying down

This method gives you more control over the baby's head and is very useful for women who have had a Caesarean.

Lie down on your side with your baby close to you, facing you and with his mouth in line with your breast. Pillows or cushions will help you to feel more comfortable when breastfeeding in this position; a pillow behind the baby's back will help keep his close to you.

How do I know when my baby has had enough milk?

This question is very common among mothers who are worried about not having enough milk for their baby. There are a number of things which will tell you that your baby is getting enough milk, such as the following:

- After breastfeeding, your breasts feel less heavy and softer.

- There will be a gradual and natural increase in your baby's weight, according to developmental standards. It should be noted that newborns usually lose approximately 10% of their birth weight during the first three days.
- There will be between six and eight wet diapers every twenty-four hours.
- The baby's stools will be yellow.

Advice for increasing the milk supply

- Breastfeed your baby every time he wants and for as long as will suffice him ("feeding on demand").
- Alternate breasts with every feeding.
- Expressing or pumping the milk remaining in your breast after breastfeeding your baby will help to increase the milk supply; the more milk is expressed from the breast the more signals are sent to the brain that the breast needs to produce more milk.
- Avoid taking contraceptive drugs because they reduce the milk supply; but consult your doctor about suitable methods of contraception whilst breastfeeding.
- Give your baby milk from your breast only, and try not to give him a bottle of milk to supplement your breast milk; the rate of milk supply will adapt to your baby's needs.

Expressing breast milk

Expressing milk means extracting milk from the breast using one's hand or a machine that pumps milk from the breast. Expressing breast milk is an alternative to direct breastfeeding in cases where you cannot feed the baby directly for some reason. By using the pump you can express milk and store it in bottles or cups that you can put in the fridge and use when you need them. Expressing milk from the breast is a new skill for you which you have to learn so that you can use it if you need to. It is a skill which, like other skills, is acquired by learning and practising.

Expressing breast milk is also an appropriate means of treating swollen breasts and increasing the amount of milk you produce.

In the event that you are not able to breastfeed your baby at some stage for any reason, such as if you are taking medicine that could affect your baby, or if you go into hospital for a short period and you cannot breastfeed naturally during the day, then expressing breast milk will help to keep up high levels of milk production during the period when you stop breastfeeding, because if you stop breastfeeding without expressing milk from your breast, that will cause the level of milk production to fall, then when you go back to breastfeeding you will have too little milk and will be forced to introduce complementary bottle feeding because your breast milk will not be enough for your baby.

Reasons for expressing breast milk

1. If the baby is in the neonatal intensive care unit, such as if he was born prematurely or is sick.
2. If there are problems with the nipple that prevent you from breastfeeding directly, such as cracked nipples, inverted nipples or pain in the nipples.
3. If there is swelling in the breast.
4. if you have to go back to work and cannot bring your baby to work with you
5. If you are not at home for lengthy periods, such as if you are visiting relatives or travelling, and you leave the baby with a nanny or servant.
6. To maintain levels of milk production during a break from breastfeeding due to illness.

Whatever the case, expressing milk is the best alternative to direct breastfeeding when necessary.

How can the mother express milk from her breast?

The mother can express milk using her hand or one of several machines that are designed for that purpose. Whatever method you use, it is regarded as a skill that requires some training and practice, and you will get better at it the more you practice it.

Expressing milk by hand

This is a low-cost method that does not require any special equipment and will save you time; you will soon get used to it and there are many women who prefer this method.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, then take a sterilized vessel to collect the milk in. Start by placing your fingers around the nipple, at a distance of 2.5-3.5 centimeters from the nipple, making a C-shape with your fingers and thumb around the areola. Gently squeeze your fingers and thumb together at the same time, whilst moving your hand backwards towards the wall of the chest. Follow this with a circular movement around the areola.

Note

If you put your thumb and fingers too close to the nipple, the squeezing will cause pain.

Vacuum pumps

There are two kinds of breast pumps:

1. Manual pumps, which are operated by squeezing a lever or plunger.
2. Mechanical pumps, which are operated by means of batteries or mains electricity. This type of pump is quicker and more effective.

To express the milk, place the suction cup over the breast before turning the pump on, then leave it to do its job of expressing the milk and pumping it into the connected container.

Notes

- Make sure that the nipple is in the middle of the disk or cup that is placed over the breast.
- It will go in and out with each pump of the machine without causing any pain.
- Make sure that the whole breast is moving. You should also ensure that the nipple is not rubbing against the cup on the inside.
- It is better to use a two-headed pump, because it is quicker and easier and will increase milk production, because it will send messages to the brain that will make the brain think that the mother is breastfeeding twins.
- If you are using a single pump, switch it from one breast to the other several times whilst expressing milk.
- Do not stop expressing so long as the milk is still flowing from your breast, so that you will not deprive your baby of the fatty milk that comes at the end.

Storing expressed breast milk

You can store expressed milk in sterilized plastic containers designed for this purpose or in sterilized plastic bags.

Freshly pumped breast milk that is stored in the refrigerator should be used within a maximum of twenty-four hours. Frozen milk should be used within a period no longer than three months.

To defrost frozen milk, put the bottle or bag in a vessel of warm water or run warm water from the tap over it, or defrost it in the refrigerator overnight. It is better not to use the microwave or bottle warmer because these two methods reduce the nutrients in the mother's milk.

Contraindications for breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is very important for the growth and development of the baby, and it is also important for the mother, and there are benefits of mother's milk as we have mentioned above. But there may be cases in which breastfeeding is not appropriate; these reasons may have to do with the mother or the baby or both. The most important of these reasons are as follows:

Factors preventing the mother from breastfeeding

- If the mother has a disease that may affect the baby, such as tuberculosis which can be transmitted by touch between the mother and her baby or through the respiratory system.
- If the mother is suffering a chronic disease that exhausts her and saps her strength, such as heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, liver disease and anaemia.
- If the mother has a contagious disease such as typhoid or a lung infection.
- If the mother becomes pregnant it is preferred for her to stop breastfeeding after the fifth month, otherwise that may pose a physiological burden on the mother.
- It is preferred to treat inverted nipples before breastfeeding the baby.
- If there is damage to the nipple, breastfeeding should be stopped for 2 to 4 days, or the mother may use a nipple shield; it is better to consult the doctor in such cases.

Factors preventing the infant from breastfeeding

- Ulcers in the baby's mouth
- Heart or lung disease

- Neurological problems that lead to a weak sucking reflex
- Children who are born prematurely are not able to suck

Bottle feeding

We should call this kind of feeding “feeding out of necessity” because I do not recommend it except in cases of urgent necessity, such as if there is some reason that prevents breastfeeding as mentioned above.

Note

If you want to breastfeed your baby but your breast milk is not enough, then you have to continue breastfeeding and consult the doctor about using bottle milk to supplement breast milk. Then you can go ahead and bottle feed, and the baby’s father can also help you to do that because it is something that both parents can do.

Types of baby formula (artificial milk)

Ready-made

This milk is sold in disposable bottles. The advantages of this kind of milk are that it does not require mixing; it is ready-to-use in sterile containers, and you never have to add water which may be contaminated, especially in developing countries. The drawback of this kind of milk is that it is expensive and it must be used within 48 hours of opening.

Liquid concentrate

With this kind of milk you have to follow the instructions on the packaging very carefully because if the ratio of milk to water is too high, this will put strain on the infant’s kidneys, but if the ratio of water to milk is too high this will affect the baby’s nutrition and hence his growth.

Dried or powdered formula

This is sold in cans of various sizes with measuring spoons; information on how to prepare it is clearly written on the cans.

The advantage of this kind of milk is that it is less expensive and there is no need to keep the can in the fridge, but it is essential to replace the lid properly. Once opened, it has to be used within one month. The drawback of this kind of milk is that it requires some extra effort on the mother's part, namely adding the milk to water and mixing it thoroughly. It is also essential to follow the written instructions very carefully and to be precise in measuring the amounts of water and formula.

Equipment needed for bottle feeding

1. Bottles. Buy ten 250 ml. bottles
2. Teats. Buy a number of teats, which come in different types including traditional, orthodontic (intended to minimize pressure on developing teeth and gums) and flat-topped (intended to emulate the shape of the breast).
3. Measuring jug. You will need to measure the amount of water according to the amount of powder or concentrated milk you want to put in the bottle.
4. Plastic funnel – to help pour the prepared milk into the bottle.
5. Plastic spoon for mixing the milk in the bottle.

A few words of advice

- Do not heat bottles in the microwave because the child may burn his mouth as a result of the bottle or teat being hot.
- Do not leave the leftover milk in the bottle for a long time without washing it; it is better to empty out any milk left in the bottle and put water in it to soak until you can wash it.
- If there is some milk left over after feeding, either throw away these leftovers or put it in the fridge as soon as the baby has finished feeding.
- You have to take all precautions to clean and sterilise bottles so that no contamination can enter the milk and harm your baby.



Sterilizing bottles

The mother has to pay a great deal of attention to sterilising all the equipment used for bottle feeding so that no germs can enter the baby's system during this period when it is very sensitive. You will need a number of things to sterilise equipment properly, as follows:

1. Sterilising liquid or tablets; these are sold in pharmacies and are added to cold water.
2. A bottle brush for cleaning the bottles from the inside; this brush should not be used for any other purpose.
3. Table salt to clean the inside of the teats.
4. A container for sterilisation in which the cold water and sterilising liquid are placed.

Sterilising bottles: tried, tested and true method

1. Put the bottles and teats in hot water and wash them, making sure to clean the bottles with a brush designed for that purpose, and remove all traces of milk.
2. Scrub the inside of the teats with salt to remove traces of milk.

3. Wash the bottles and the teats and all the equipment in cold water.
4. Clean the hole in the teat with a pin.
5. Fill the sterilisation bucket with cold water then add the sterilising liquid or tablets, then add the equipment to the bucket.
6. Stir the equipment in the bucket, then put the lid on it and close it.
7. Leave the equipment in the sterilised water for a while, then take things out as you need them and let them dry.

Other methods of sterilizing bottles

There are numerous electrical appliances on the market that sterilize bottles, teats and so on using steam, microwave technology and so on. These may save time and effort.

Preparing bottles

1. Bring water to the boil
2. Pour the right amount of hot water into the bottle, following the instructions on the formula container
3. Add the right amount of powder for the amount of water in the bottle, using the scoop supplied with the formula.
4. Put the lid on the bottle and shake it vigorously until the powder dissolves completely.
5. Put the teat on the bottle without touching the part that will go in the baby's mouth, then leave it to cool to the right temperature.
6. The bottle should be at body temperature when giving it to the baby (35- 37°C).

Note

A new teat may restrict the flow of milk and be too slow for your child. If that is the case you can widen the hole by using a

sterilized pin or needle; insert the needle in the hole of the teat to make it wider. If that does not solve the problem then you can make more than one hole.

Do not force your baby to feed after he feels full, because his appetite may differ from one meal to another and if the mother forces the baby to eat more food that may have the opposite effect and may lead to loss of appetite.

Burping

Your baby will swallow some air whilst feeding, hence it is essential to burp him so that you can help him to get rid of this air, which otherwise may cause him indigestion or make him feel full when he has not had enough.

There are several ways of burping your baby

1. Lay him on your lap, facing downwards.
2. Lift him up until his chest is resting on your shoulder, then rub his back or pat his back gently.
3. Hold your baby upright with his head tilted slightly forward whilst supporting his neck and back, then pat his back gently as shown in the picture.
4. He may regurgitate some of the milk; it is a good idea to put a bib on him and place a receiving blanket or small, soft towel on your lap or shoulder, to keep clothes clean and make clean-up easier.

Keeping your baby clean



Bathing

Before starting to bath your baby you should prepare everything you need to carry out this task, as follows:

1. A tub of warm water
2. Mild soap and shampoo that are safe for use on infants
3. A soft sponge or flannel
4. A soft towel
5. Clean diaper and clothes

Then you can start bathing your baby

Bathing the baby – step-by-step

1. Remove the clothes from your baby's top half and clean his nose, ears, eyes and face using a soft sponge or flannel that is suitable for use on infants.
2. Remove the clothes from your baby's lower half and start cleaning his stomach and genitals in the usual manner. Now you can gently lower the baby into the water and start bathing him.
3. Wash the baby's head with water and mild shampoo or soap, if you did not do so previously. Do not use shampoo or soap that is perfumed.
4. Wash the baby's body with water and mild soap, paying attention to cleaning the folds of his neck.
5. Wash all the folds and creases of the body and also the genital area.
6. Rinse the baby's body then lift him safely, by putting your left hand beneath his head, neck and shoulders and your right hand beneath his bottom, then place him on a soft towel and gently dry him.
7. If the umbilical cord or circumcision (in the case of a baby boy) has not yet healed, you can give your baby a sponge bath instead of using a tub; make sure to clean folds on skin in the neck area.
8. Do not try to pull on the baby's umbilical cord before it falls off by itself, so that you will not cause him to bleed.
9. It is better to bathe and dress the baby in the same room so that he will not be exposed to drafts before, during or after having a bath.
10. It is better to give him a bath half an hour before he is due to breastfeed.
11. The bath should not take more than five minutes so that the baby will not catch a cold.

12. Play with your baby and talk to him during his bath and when he is in the water so that you will leave him with a good impression of bathing and water in general.

13. Put some cream on your baby's bottom to prevent diaper rash, such as zinc cream, then put some oil that is suitable for children on his body and rub it all over his body, giving particular attention to creases and folds in the skin. This will help to moisturise the baby's body. Do not use cologne or perfumed substances that may lead to a skin infection.

14. Do not let the temperature of the water be any higher than 37°C or less than 36°C. Do not leave the baby in the water on his own, even for a single moment. Do not let your baby stand up in the tub until he is able to stand firmly.

15. Do not add hot water to the water in tub when your baby is in the water.

Cleaning the parts of your baby's body (sponge bath)

You may use another way of cleaning your baby, which is cleaning each part of the body on its own (known as a sponge bath). This may be done if the child is sick or has a low weight or is very nervous in water.

Here are some ways of cleaning your baby's body bit by bit

Skin

Various kinds of spots and rashes may form on your newborn's skin; most of these spots will disappear and clear up completely by themselves. But if the skin rash persists, this is indicative of a medical issue and you have to consult a doctor.

With regard to cleaning the skin, this is done by using a soft sponge or flannel with which you rub the baby's skin gently after wetting the sponge with lukewarm water. Then dry the skin with

a soft towel and put oil suited for children on the skin to help moisturize it.

Eyes

Each eye should be cleaned separately using a piece of cotton wool dampened with warm (not hot) water for each eye. Wipe from the inside corner to the outside edge of the eye.

Ears

Clean the outside and inside of the ear only, not inside the ear canal; this is done by using a cloth or flannel, not a cotton bud or Q-Tip™, which may damage the eardrum.

Nose

Clean the baby's nose with a cloth or flannel from the outside every day, wiping gently around each nostril.

Nails

You can clip the baby's nails easily when he is asleep, but that should be done regularly so that he will not scratch his face by accident when moving his arms randomly. So make that part of your routine.

Navel (bellybutton)

When the umbilical cord falls off, the area may look not fully healed and it may take a few days or weeks to heal completely. This unhealed area does not need any dressing but it should be kept clean and dry so that it will not become infected. Keeping it dry will help the skin to form over it until it heals completely. When the stump of the umbilical cord falls off the child can take a bath in the tub. When changing the baby's diaper, fold down the top edge to leave the umbilical area clear and keep it dry until it heals. If you notice any discharge from that area or the skin around it becomes red, consult the doctor.

Diapers (nappies)

There is more than one choice of diapers for the mother, because there are many types of diapers and each mother can find what suits her. Some mothers use more than one type, such as using cloth diapers at home and disposable diapers when out and about with the baby or when travelling.

Types of diapers

Disposable diapers

This type is preferred by many mothers because they make it easy and quick for her to change the diaper. They are also available in all sizes, suited to the baby's stages of growth.

Cloth diapers

These are diapers that are washed and reused. There are several types, ranging from the traditional "flat" diapers made of towelling fabric that are folded and secured with pins or tape, then covered with waterproof pants, to a dazzling array of "fitted" cloth diapers in various designs and colours. Some mothers prefer to use a disposable liner inside the diaper as well

Changing the diaper-1

- It is better to change the diaper every time the baby has a bowel movement
- After cleaning thoroughly, apply Vaseline or a protective cream to the area, but do not use perfumed wipes or cortisone creams. Try not to fasten the diaper too tightly so as to allow some ventilation.
- Try to leave the baby without the diaper whenever you can because not exposing this area to the air may lead to germs collecting and causing infection.

What you will need when changing a diaper

1. Cloths or flannels
2. A jug of warm water to which a little mild soap has been added
3. Barrier cream
4. Water resistant cream such as zinc cream with castor oil. Do not apply talcum powder over the area to which cream has been applied
5. Non-perfumed wet wipes designed for use with infants, which may be used to clean the baby's bottom when you are outside the home.

Changing the diaper-2

Make sure you have everything you need before you start changing the diaper. Never leave the baby alone on a change table or bed, because he may wriggle and fall.

- Lift the baby's back by holding on to his ankles to prevent him moving
- Roll up the dirty diaper to halfway under the baby, so that the clean side will be outermost
- Lift the baby's legs and clean his bottom carefully
- Use a damp cloth or wet wipe to clean your child from the front. Always clean the baby front to back; in the case of a girl, this step will help to reduce the possibility of bacteria reaching the vulva and causing infection.
- Lift your baby's legs and clean his behind.
- Lay your baby on his back after cleaning his behind and drying it. Then lift him up a little and put half of the new diaper beneath him.
- Bring the other half out between his legs then fold the upper part of it beneath his belly button if it is not yet healed properly.

- Fasten the diaper by bringing the two edges together and attaching them firmly to one another so as to avoid leaks.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.

Protecting the baby from diaper rash

The baby may get an infection in the diaper area; this infection appears in the form of a skin rash and reddening of the skin. In order to protect your baby against this infection, you have to do the following:

1. Change his diaper regularly every time the baby urinates so that his skin will stay dry.
2. Set aside some times when you take off your baby's diaper so that the air can reach the skin.
3. Do not fasten the diaper too tightly, so that some air can reach the skin.
4. Put some cream, such as zinc oxide, to protect the skin from dampness and irritating substances.
5. If the skin rash persists for a long time then you have to consult the doctor.



Dressing your baby

Pay attention to a number of things when buying clothes for your baby. The two most important matters with regard to clothes are:

- The clothes should keep the baby comfortably warm by guaranteeing that he will not be exposed to cold or draughts that may make him sick
- It is also essential to ensure that the clothes do not make the baby too hot, because this may lead to sweating, which will cause the body to lose a lot of water, leading to dehydration.

There are some other things to pay attention to when buying clothes for your baby:

- Because your baby will grow quickly at this age, do not buy too many clothes and do not spend too much on fancy clothes because you will soon have to buy new ones.
- Make sure that pants are easy to fasten, made of soft and flexible material and easy to wash in an ordinary washing machine.

- Cotton clothes are preferable, because this fabric is easy to clean and dry, and it is soft on the baby's skin.
- Avoid clothes that have drawstrings and large collars because they may get wrapped around the baby's neck, posing a risk of strangulation.
- Always try to dress your baby in loose clothes, because tight clothes may deform his growing bones and also prevent sweat from evaporating from the baby's skin.

Tips and tricks for dressing your baby

- Before you start dressing the baby, first make sure that you have everything you will need to dress him.
- It is preferable to choose a time when the baby is happy and not crying.
- Try to distract his attention by playing with him or hanging a mobile or toys over the place where you dress your baby.
- Lay the baby down on a bed or change table so that he will be comfortable whilst his mother dresses him.

Dressing the baby step-by-step

1. When putting on the vest, open the neck as much as possible, then pass the back of it under the baby's head, then bring the front of it down to his neck. Then lift his head and pull the back of the vest downwards until it is level with his shoulders.
2. Then put your hand in one of the sleeves and pull the child's arm through it; do the same with the other arm.
3. Pull the front of the garment down to the baby's stomach, then lift his legs and pull the lower part of the vest down and fasten the two ends of the vest together.

Carrying your baby

It is essential for the mother to know how to carry her baby safely, especially in the first few days, because at that stage the baby cannot control his head and his limbs are very delicate. So you have to be careful when picking up your baby.

When picking up the baby, the mother should put one hand under his neck to support his head properly, then place the other hand beneath his bottom, so that he will feel safe.

If the mother wants to pick him up off the ground, she should first kneel down, then proceed with the steps mentioned above. Then she can lift him up and get up with him. She should avoid lifting up the child by his arms or one of his sides.

If the mother wants to carry the child whilst standing or walking, the baby's head should be resting in the crook of her elbow, but she should keep his head a little higher than the rest of his body, and at the same time her other arm should be wrapped around the baby's back.

The baby may also be carried in another way: the mother can carry the baby in such a way that his upper half is resting against his mother's chest, with his chest against her shoulder, and she can support her baby's head with one hand, with the other hand supporting his back.

Common childhood problems

High temperature

High temperature is the body's means of warding off sickness. When the human body is under attack by any foreign body such as bacteria or viruses, the white blood cells, which are called defensive cells, attack the foreign bodies and attempt to destroy them. When the battle between the defensive cells and the foreign bodies grows intense, the defensive cells seek help from the brain to raise the temperature of the body because the heat may kill some kinds of bacteria immediately.

Heat also encourages the body to produce more white blood cells which then join other defensive cells in fighting the foreign bodies.

High temperature is also regarded as a strong indication of the presence of some problem or sickness in the human body.

When should I be worried about my baby's temperature?

The body temperature of a healthy baby varies between 36.5 and 37.7°C. It should be noted that the temperature of an infant may be slightly higher than that of a toddler, and the temperature tends to be higher during the day and lower during the night.

If your baby's temperature is higher than normal, i.e., above 37.8°C and that is accompanied by distress or he is bothered by this temperature, then this is cause for concern.

The most common causes of high temperature in babies

High temperature is indicative of the presence of infection in the child's body, which varies according to the disease that the child

is suffering from. The cases which most often lead to high temperature in the child are as follows:

- The infant will usually experience raised temperature after having a vaccination.
- When he catches a cold or flu
- When he has an infection in his throat or ear
- When he has an infection of the upper respiratory tract or lungs, or he has bronchitis
- Viral infections
- Infections of the urinary tract

Treating high temperature in the infant

1. Dress your baby in light cotton clothing
2. If your baby is over two months old, you can give him a dose of medicine that will bring down his temperature; a doctor can prescribe the correct type and amount of medicine to give your child.
3. Try to ventilate the room and turn on the air conditioning or a fan to make the room cool.
4. Put your baby in a tub of lukewarm water and do not dry him after he has a bath
5. Pay attention to your baby's food and give him a lot of liquids

Heat rash

Heat rash appears on the child in the form of red pimples or spots around the neck, under the armpits, on the chest and in the diaper area, or under the underwear. They may also appear on the child's forehead. This rash is regarded as an indication that the child is hotter than he should be. The reason for that may be wearing heavy clothes or elevated air temperature.

If the weather is hot and humid, your child will sweat more than usual. If your child sweats a great deal, then this sweat will leak from his body through the pores in his skin. If this sweat does not leak out of his body through these pores, which usually happens to children because the pores in their skin are small and their clothes are usually thick and close-fitting, then the child's body traps the sweat and this sweat appears in the form of heat rash (red spots) on the child's skin.

Protection against heat rash

- If you feel that the weather is hot, dress your child in light, loose clothes so that he will not sweat.
- Do not take your child outside if the weather is hot.
- Always try to ventilate the child's bedroom and keep it cool if the weather is hot, by using a fan or air conditioning in his room.
- Dermatologists think that natural fabrics such as cotton are better than synthetic fabrics at absorbing sweat.

How can I treat my child if he has heat rash?

1. Take off some of the child's clothes so that he will feel cooler, and let him go naked sometimes.
2. Cool the area affected by using cold cloths, or put the child in a tub of lukewarm water which will soothe the heat rash.
3. Put some calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream on the affected area.
4. If the spots spread or do not clear up within 3 to 4 days, consult a doctor.

Crying

Crying is regarded as the main means by which your child expresses his needs and it is his only way of communicating with others.

Your baby does not cry for no reason in most cases; rather he cries because he needs something specific which he wants you to provide for him. In the first few weeks, the crying may be without tears and it is not expressive, but the tone will change in the first few months until he has various tones which express what is on his mind.

After the first few weeks, the mother becomes able to distinguish the various cries of her baby from her experience and she will also be able to recognize her baby's problem from the tone of his crying. We will discuss this in more detail below.

HOW MUCH DO BABIES CRY ON AVERAGE?

According to a study on babies' crying that was carried out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the University of London, the average baby who is in good health cries for a total of two hours a day in the first three months of life.

Excessive crying is defined as that which lasts for longer than three hours per day; if your baby cries for that long, then you have to consult a doctor.

Your baby's crying: causes and remedies

Hunger

Hunger is regarded as the main reason why your baby cries. If you feel that your baby is hungry, then hasten to offer him milk. The reason for his hunger may be that your breasts are not producing enough milk; in babies who are bottle-fed, the reason may be that he was not given enough milk or that the milk was diluted too much. If you are breastfeeding your baby, then offer him the breast and do not take him off it until he has had enough. If you are bottle feeding, then offer him milk or diluted fruit juice.

Pain

Babies cry when they feel pain, and infants do indeed feel pain, contrary to the mistaken belief that is held by some mothers that the infant does not feel pain because his nervous system is not yet fully developed. But modern studies have proven that babies feel pain even when they are still in their mothers' wombs, because the nervous system that transmits feelings of pain is fully developed.

You can tell when your baby feels pain by watching his movements. When a baby feels pain he waves his arms and legs, and if the pain gets worse he draws his knees up to his tummy.

Temperature

You have to watch your baby constantly to check if he is too hot or too cold. You should note that his arms and legs will not give a proper indication of the baby's temperature; rather the best way to check his temperature is to put your hand on the baby's tummy. If you feel his temperature is elevated, then consult a doctor immediately.

If your baby feels cold, that will also lead to him crying. Dress your baby in clothes that are suitable for the temperature, whether it is cold or hot.

Wet diaper

One of the things that will bother your baby a great deal is being wet, so you have to recognize when your baby needs his diaper changed and whether the diaper pins are properly fastened or not.

Sudden changes

Any sudden change in the baby's environment, such as loud and sudden noises or bright lights, will cause a kind of distress or anxiety for your baby which will make him cry.

Feeling lonely

Your baby will cry when he feels bored as a result of being left alone whilst awake for a long time, without his mother playing with him or the company of anyone nearby. So you should not leave your baby alone for long periods of time so that he will not feel bored

Fear of strangers

A stranger, for your baby, is anyone who he is not used to seeing regularly, even if that is his father. This is something natural in infants.

Colic

Colic is regarded as one of the most common reasons for crying up to the age of three months. It is not a sickness in and of itself and in the vast majority of cases there is no medical cause for this symptom, but there is no reason not to consult a doctor in order to put your mind at rest that there is no hidden medical problem. In the event of colic the baby will pull his knees up towards his stomach, his face will turn red and he will begin to cry loudly in an ongoing fashion, and none of the mother's attempts to calm him down will succeed; when he does calm down, he may start to cry again after a few moments of silence.

Causes that may lead to colic

- Too much or too little milk, or milk that is too hot or too cold in the case of bottle feeding
- Gas in the intestines resulting from certain ingredients in the milk which are difficult for the baby's body to absorb. This gas may also form as a result of the mother eating some foods that cause gas, such as onions and garlic, which pass into the milk and hence bothers the baby.

- Sensitivity of the baby's nervous system during the first three months
- Psychological problems in the mother during pregnancy

How to deal with colic

- Consult a doctor to make sure that there is no sickness behind it
- Rub the baby's tummy gently
- Touch the baby and show him more compassion. Hugging, patting and other ways of showing affection, and playing with your baby, will have a positive effect and calm him down, and will distract him from his colic. Do not be surprised if his crying resumes; rather carry on touching him, hugging him and massaging him.
- Pay attention to your child's nature. Your baby may be one of those who get distressed easily, so he may cry for any reason and for no reason. It is difficult to stop these children crying because their nervous system and digestive system are not yet able to cope with the outside world. The way to deal with that is to be patient and not lose your temper; accept the situation in the hope that it will improve, give your baby enough time and show him more affection.

A few words of advice

1. Check the baby's diaper and find out if it needs changing or not
2. Make sure that your baby is not hungry or thirsty
3. Make sure that he is not too hot or too cold
4. Make sure that he is not sick
5. Gently rock your baby in your arms or a swinging cradle
6. Go out of the house for a walk with your baby
7. Turn on the radio or TV and put the volume up when your baby feels bored

8. Give your baby plenty of love and affection

9. Leave the baby with his father sometimes so that you can get the rest you need. I suggest that you should have beds in two different rooms in the house so that the parents can take turns to sleep in a quiet room whilst the other parent sleeps in another room with the baby.

10. Accept the fact that all babies at this stage cry; were it not for this crying you would not be able to find out what your baby needs, and there is great divine wisdom in that.

Work out your baby's problem from the sound of his crying

To find out what your baby's problem is, first look for the reasons mentioned above which may lead to the baby crying. There follow some signs which will help you to work out what the baby's problem probably is from the tone of his crying, taking into consideration the fact that not all children are the same in this regard.

- Cry of hunger – this is a short cry with persistent rising and falling of volume
- Cry of anger – when the baby is upset and looks angry
- Cry of distress – the cry varies; sometimes it is loud and long, then there will be a long pause, followed by persistent crying with a level tone.
- Cry of colic – a loud cry that may last for hours

Give free rein to your common sense and act accordingly.

Allah says:

“Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah” [al-Room 30:30].

Allah has created in the mother warm compassion towards her children, and the strong inclination to hold them gently and enjoy their love. These are the most important things that the baby needs in the first year of his life.

There were some scientific studies that said that the mother should not carry her child a great deal so that the child will not get used to that, and that she should make him sleep at regular hours, and that if he cries with no reason, she should leave him to cry so that he does not get used to being carried all the time. But the outcome was that children became aggressive and more violent, and they had a lot of emotional and temperamental problems. So now the scientific studies and research say that you should pick up your baby whenever he cries, calm him down, kiss him and pat his face to make him feel safe; breastfeed him whenever he needs it at any time of night or day. All of these matters are psychological needs of the child, and satisfying those needs is one of the most important things that you should be well aware of. Give your child love, compassion and care so that he will grow up properly and will be emotionally stable.

Say No to emotional weaning



If the mother weans her baby from the breast too early, she will deprive him of his right to the natural nutrition that Allah has given him. By the same token, if she deprives her baby of his natural right to care and compassion, then she is weaning him emotionally and socially. This weaning is regarded as more serious than early physical weaning.

Do not listen to anyone who says that you are spoiling your baby. Rather pick up your child, kiss him on his face and hands, tickle his feet, gently touch his face and nose, and always keep him close to you.



The baby can feel from the earliest months if he is loved and welcomed by the family or if he is not welcome, from the extent of care, love and compassion that is shown towards him; if the opposite is the case then he will feel that he is neglected and ignored, and that no one cares about him.

All of that will have a strong impact on his psychology and feelings, and will form the foundation of his strength of character and self-confidence.

All that is required of you is to be patient and keep calm, and to give your baby his basic needs: breastfeeding, changing his clothes and diapers, bathing him and playing with him.

Despite the difficulties that you will encounter during this period, you will soon find yourself missing this stage, then you will want to bring a brother or sister for your child. All of that is part of the nature (fitrah) with which Allah has created you.



A few words of advice

1. Do not be silent with your baby; talking to him and having physical contact with him are important means of strengthening the relationship between you and him.
2. Strengthen communication with your baby by means of eye contact and getting close to him when feeding him or playing with him.
3. Get closer to your husband so that he will not feel that he has been forgotten. Many fathers feel that their wives have lost interest in them, and the reason for that is that the mother is busy with the newcomer. So set aside some time every day to spend with the baby and with his father.
4. Let your husband participate with you in taking care of the baby.



Sleep

Your baby will sleep a lot because his body needs it. You cannot force your baby to sleep any more or any less than he does; all you have to do is get to know his sleep pattern and adapt yourself to the times he sleeps so that you can sleep and rest too, and regain your strength. You also have to provide a calm atmosphere for him, free of noise, so that he can enjoy peaceful sleep. Keep away from things that will disturb him whilst he is sleeping, such as turning on the washing machine if it is near his bedroom, or using the vacuum cleaner or food mixer or any other appliance that may disturb him when he is asleep.

Average sleep times of babies

How long should my baby sleep? This is a question that many fathers and mothers ask but the only person who can answer this question is the baby himself. One baby may sleep for a short time whilst another baby may sleep for a long time, but usually the time a newborn baby spends asleep varies between sixteen and twenty hours per day. Every time the baby wakes up crying, it is because he feels hungry, approximately every 3 or 4 hours.

You should remember that your baby's sleep pattern will be random during the first two months of his life, because he sleeps most of the hours of the day and wakes up most of the time at night. Do not be worried by this random pattern because your baby is still too small to distinguish between night and day. But after that he will gradually start to fall into a pattern of sleep.

Is it better for the mother to sleep next to her child?

I shall let you answer this question yourself, after you decide about an important matter. Are you the type who usually sleeps deeply, or do you take medication or tranquilizers that affect your sleep, or are you the type that sleeps lightly and doesn't turn over much? If you are the first type, I advise you to let your baby sleep in a crib, separate from you but close to where you sleep, because letting him sleep by your side carries the risk that you may roll over on top of him without realizing it, even though such incidents are very rare among mothers. But if you are of the second type, there is no reason why your baby should not sleep next to you during the first three months of life.

Where should the newborn baby sleep?

It is preferable for newborns to sleep close to their parents, but it is better for the baby not to sleep in the same bed as his parents. The best place for the baby to sleep is in a bassinet close to the parents' bed or in a crib.

Bassinet

Among the advantages of the bassinet are that it is practical and can be carried from room to room. The bassinet should be comfortable and it may be lined with an attractive lining.

Crib

When your baby outgrows the bassinet, or when he starts to move a great deal and turn over, then you have to move him to the crib.

The crib may also be used from the outset, instead of the bassinet, but the crib cannot be carried from one room to another as is the case with the bassinet.

Safety concerns

In order for the crib to be safe, attention should be paid to the following points:

1. It should be strongly constructed and built to last so that you can use it for subsequent children.
2. It should be possible to rock or swing the crib, because the child feels comforted when the crib is rocked. But you have to make sure that the crib will not tip over when being rocked, and that it can be immobilised when the baby is sleeping.
3. The crib should have a firm, flat comfortable mattress that fits tightly into the crib.

How to keep the baby safe when he is sleeping

1. Do not use heavy blankets or soft mattresses because that will make the baby too hot.
2. It is preferable to use thin, cellular blankets and to tuck the end of the blanket under the mattress so that it will not cover the baby's face and cause him to suffocate.
3. You should always leave his head uncovered.
4. Put your baby in the crib with his feet touching the foot of the crib, because that will prevent him slipping beneath the blanket, and he will be able to free himself from the covers if he feels too

hot. His head will also be safe from hitting the end of the crib when you pick him up.

5. Always clean the baby's mattress and air it out, and make sure that it is dry. Also make sure that there is no gap between the mattress and the edge of the crib.

6. Do not leave toys or other items next to your baby in the crib.

Should the baby sleep on his back or on his tummy?

A number of recent studies have shown that the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is reduced when babies are put to sleep on their backs, and it is increased when babies are put to sleep on their tummies, because when the baby sleeps on his face he is exposed to the risk of suffocation because his mouth is too close to the crib mattress. Most babies tend to sleep on their backs because that is easier for them. In addition to that, sleeping on their backs has no negative effects on healthy babies. Sleeping on their sides is less safe than sleeping on their backs because children who sleep on their sides usually roll over onto their tummies and end up with their faces downwards. So it is essential for your baby to get used to sleeping on his back from the beginning.

Do babies dream?

Up till now, scientists are not sure whether babies dream or not, but it is most likely that babies do dream.

Should I leave my baby to cry on his own until he goes to sleep?

Babies often cry when they are left on their own before sleeping; this is an expression of fear or it is a protest at being left on their own. Part of the wisdom in the baby's crying is that it attracts his mother's attention and concern, and it enables the child to

express what he cannot speak of. Crying is the only means that the baby has of expressing his feelings.

If the baby cries and no one shows any interest in him, he will feel unsafe and that he is alone, and this will gradually affect his psychology. This is also contrary to the mother's natural compassion towards her child. Hence, I advise every mother not to leave her baby crying on his own for a long time, and not to leave him crying on his own until he falls asleep, because that will have a great impact on the baby's psychology. But if the baby is sleeping and wakes up crying, there is nothing wrong with leaving him to cry for a little while, then if he does not stop crying, you should go to him and try to calm him down by patting him and smiling at him and showing compassion.

How will I know when my baby feels sleepy and that he is ready to go to sleep?

There are several signals from which you can tell whether your baby is ready to sleep or not:

1. His movements slow down
2. He looks as if he is staring at something in front of him when in fact there is nothing there
3. He starts to yawn
4. He rubs his eyes
5. He loses interest in the people around him and in his toys
6. He becomes irritable
7. He leans his head into your chest

Types of sleep and waking in newborns

Deep, peaceful sleep

This is known as non-rapid eye movement sleep (NREM sleep). This stage includes four steps (drowsiness – light sleep – deep sleep – very deep sleep) all of which occur gradually.

In the stage of deep sleep, there is no outward movement during this stage, during which the sleep hormone is produced.

Active sleep

This is known as rapid eye movement sleep (REM sleep). Studies have shown that this stage of sleep is important in forming the child's memory and in brain development, and it is during this stage that dreams occur. In newborn infants, half the time spent asleep is taken up by active sleep whereas adults spend 25% of their time asleep in this stage.

The child may appear active in his sleep and some expressions may appear on his face (such as smiles and frowns); his eyes may move beneath his half-open eyelids and it may look as if the child is going to wake up. He may also move his arms and legs from time to time.

Drowsiness

In this case the baby is in a state between sleep and wakefulness, so do not try to pick him up or talk to him.

Waking up calmly

The baby is calm and alert to everything that is going on around him and he does not move a great deal, but he is able to respond with a smile or facial expression.

Waking up energetically

The baby is active and may be troubled. He moves his arms and legs and it is as if he is getting ready to cry and yell.

Waking up upset

The baby is upset and cries loudly, and you cannot calm him despite your best efforts. This stage may occur in the first weeks after birth but it soon passes at the beginning of the third month.

After you have figured out the stages of your baby's sleep you will be able to help him to organise his pattern of sleep.

Encouraging your baby to develop good sleep habits

- Get your baby used to a regular routine before sleeping, such as a bath, then feeding him until he is full, because hunger will disturb him and wake him up. Then put the baby in his crib whilst playing with him a little for a short time, and darken the room. If you repeat this routine every day your baby will come to understand that it is now time to go to sleep.
- Try to have a daily routine for the baby so that he will get used to it. But this does not mean that you should be rigid in implementing it. Rather you have to be flexible especially when dealing with the baby; there is no reason why there should not be some variety according to your and your baby's circumstances.
- Gradually get your baby used to going to sleep on his own with no one helping him.
- Make sure that the baby's bed is suitable, warm enough but not so warm that it exposes him to various problems.
- Do not use pillows or a soft mattress.
- The mother should prepare everything that she will need during the night and have it on hand so that she will not have to pick the

baby up and carry him out of the room in order to bring something that she needs, because this will disturb the baby.

- If the baby has been asleep for a long time, the mother should wake him up so that she can feed him. Although sleep is important, nutrition is even more important.
- If your baby wakes up at night crying, go to him and try to calm him down without picking him up so that he will not feel that you approve of his crying. Let him calm down by himself and go back to sleep.
- Do not smoke near your baby. Babies who are exposed to cigarette smoke are more at risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Let your baby have a nap in the same place that he sleeps at night so that he will connect sleep with a particular place. Of course, he can take a nap in the car or stroller if you are out and about, but try to give him the opportunity to sleep in the same place most of the time.
- If you hear your baby crying, leave him for a few minutes to see if he will settle down by himself. If he carries on crying go to him and play with him gently but do not pick him up; talk to him softly so that you will not make him wake up and so that he does not stop feeling sleepy.
- If your baby calms down, leave the room again. If he starts to cry again, then stand still but do not go to him for a few more minutes, for a longer time than previously. Then go to him and try to calm him down without picking him up. You may have to repeat this a few times but after that the baby will get used to going to sleep on his own.

Is it possible to train my baby to differentiate between night and day?

Yes it is possible to do that, but you have to try to make night-time habits different from daytime habits. During the day

you should rock him and play with him and sing to him, and there should be activity and attempts to make him laugh and attract his attention and create an exciting and happy atmosphere. But at night, it should be quiet, the lights should be dim, and there should be no talking to him or trying to make him laugh or any other noise when he is trying to sleep, so as to create an atmosphere that will encourage sleep, until he gradually learns to differentiate between night and day.

Dealing with sleep disturbances in babies

Sleep disturbances are something normal in a baby's early days, but if these disturbances continue for a long time, you need to check on several things:

Temperature in the bedroom

You need to make sure that the temperature in the bedroom is comfortable, neither too warm nor too cold. You should also check the baby's clothes, because it may be the clothes that are making the baby feel too hot.

Is the baby afraid of the dark?

Some children do not like the room to be completely dark and they cannot sleep in the dark because they do not feel safe. Hence it is better for there to be some dim light in the bedroom so that the baby will feel safer.

Some babies are bothered by excessive light in the bedroom, especially sunlight in the morning

The baby may be bothered by the sunlight shining into his room in the morning, which leads to him waking up. If this is the case with your baby, then place a heavy curtain over the window to keep the light out, so that your baby can sleep without being disturbed.

Noise near the baby

You have to find out what sounds are bothering your baby, because sensitivity to noise varies from one infant to another. Some babies are bothered by the noise of fridges, washing machines and dripping taps, and others are bothered by the sound of a door opening and closing, doorbells, televisions, or the sound of other children in the house yelling.

Diaper

Make sure that the baby is not wet; if he is wet, then change his diaper.

Check whether the baby's clothes are comfortable or not

Tight clothes or socks may be painful or annoying, thus preventing peaceful sleep.

Make sure that the baby's crying is not due to hunger

Because the baby's stomach does not hold enough to sustain him for many hours.

Massaging your baby

Massage is very beneficial for babies; it relaxes them and makes them feel content. Hence most babies like massage, especially if it is accompanied by some joking and playing.

Note

Waking up crying even when none of the reasons mentioned above are present is something normal in infants at this stage, so do not worry.

How to deal with early waking

1. Hang thick curtains at the window of the baby's room to block daylight.
2. Do not go to him straight away when he wakes up; leave him for a few minutes before going to him.
3. Keep him awake for one hour before bedtime so as to reset his biological clock.

If none of the methods work, you may have to adapt to your baby's sleep schedule, because many infants cannot stay asleep until a late hour in the morning; you have to adapt to his pattern of sleep until he is six months old, then his pattern of sleep will change.

Child development from birth to 3 months

Physical development

It is very important to follow your baby's development (his growth, weight, length / height); keep an eye on his growth in relation to his length/height, weight and age. This development should also be recorded in the baby's medical record, so that the doctor can determine how appropriate the baby's development is and whether it is within the average limits or not.

There is no fixed pattern or rate of growth for all babies; rather each baby has his own rate and pattern. But there are some average ranges within which most babies fall.

Rate of weight gain

Infants normally gain four ounces to seven ounces every week in the first month of life. Afterwards, babies gain a pound to two pounds every month for the five succeeding months. Healthy babies gain a pound every month from six months to a year.

Baby's weight average growth rate from birth to six months is seven pounds to 12 pounds or three to five kilograms. From six months to the first year of life, the normal weight gain in babies is five to seven pounds or two to three kilograms. The mean growth rate of babies from one year to two years is also five to seven pounds.

Growth in length/height

In terms of height, from birth to six months, infants grow an inch or 2.5 cm every month. Afterwards, babies grow 0.5 inch or a centimeter every month up to the first year of life. The normal growth rate in terms of height is six to seven inches or 15 to 18 cm for the first six months. From six months to a year, babies' normal growth rate is three inches to four inches or eight cm to

10 cm. From one year to two years of age, babies grow four to five inches or 10 to 13 cm.

Pattern of developmental milestones

Growth charts for girls

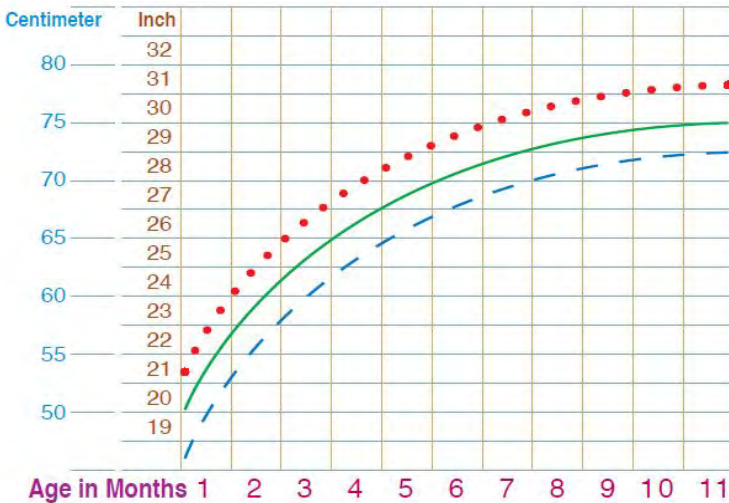
1. Length/height
2. Weight

Growth charts for boys

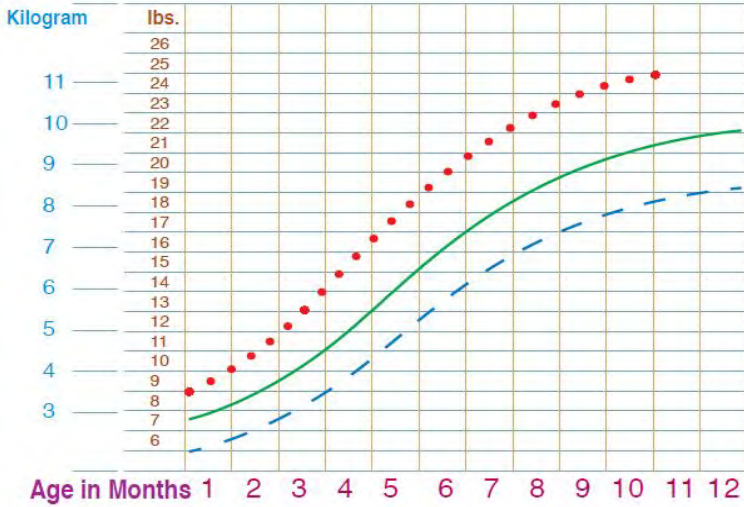
1. Length/height
2. Weight

Growth charts for girls

Female Length/height

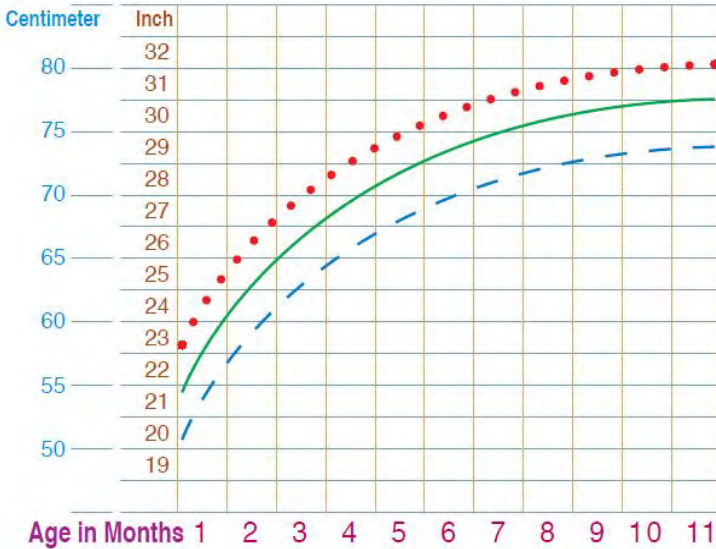


Female Weight

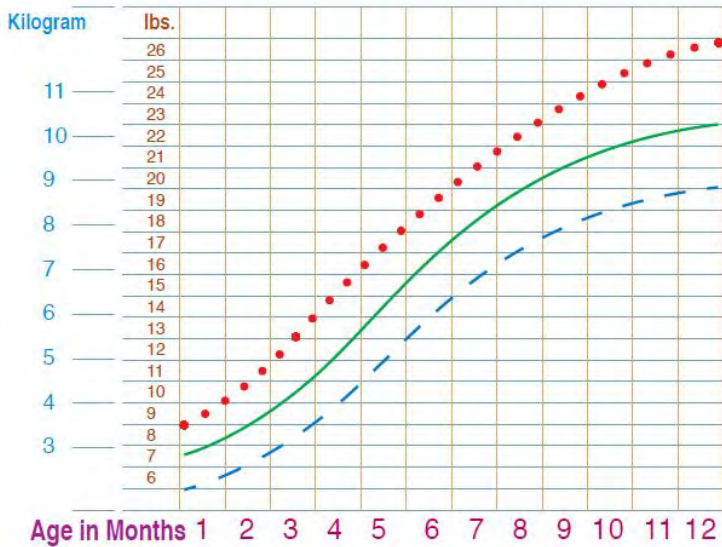


Growth charts for boys

Male Length/height



Male Weight



The first month

The baby is constantly growing from the first day and in this month we see a number of physical developments having to do with the growth of large and small muscles. The large muscles of the body include muscles in the torso, neck, legs and arms. The small muscles include the hands, feet, and fingers. Hand-eye coordination is also connected to the growth of small muscles.

Physical development

The newborn infant has no ability to control his movements; rather all his movements are regarded as spontaneous or random, such as involuntary smiles, movements of the arms and his stopping crying when he is picked up or touched by his mother or he hears her voice.

- His head flops backwards if you try to make him sit up or when you lift him when getting him dressed.
- If you lay the newborn on his back, you will notice that he tends to adopt the same position as the foetus in the uterus; he draws

up his legs towards his tummy and clenches his fists, and he may cry if you try to stretch out his legs. All of this is quite natural.

- His fists are closed or slightly open, and he may be able to grasp if something is placed in his open hand, but he soon drops it.
- Your baby starts to discover his limbs from birth. He does not realise that he possesses arms and legs but this will start to change now, as he begins to discover his body. The parts that he will discover first are his hands and feet.
- The baby is able to follow moving objects with his eyes and to fix his gaze on moving objects. He has been able to do that from birth, for short periods, and now you can play with him eye to eye by putting your face very close to his face and shaking your head; you will find that he will usually fix his gaze on you.

Linguistic development

The newborn baby does not make any linguistic advances in the first month, although he may make some random sounds that have no meaning.

Social-emotional development

This refers to the child's interaction with the people around him. All of the developments at this stage are involuntary, such as stopping crying when he is picked up or when he hears his mother's voice.

The baby may gurgle at the age of one month, or he may coo like a pigeon, or shout or mumble to express his feelings. Do not hesitate to respond to him in the same manner and speak to him face-to-face.

The second month

Physical development

1. Now the baby starts to open his eyes more than in the first month, when he spent most of his time sleeping with his eyes

closed. You may be able to discern the colour of his eyes for the first time.

2. The baby becomes more able to control the movement of his head, as he is able to hold his head at the same level as his body when he is carried.

3. When pulling your baby into a sitting position, his head falls backwards less than before.

4. Movement of the arms and legs is still involuntary.

5. Now he can hold things for a longer time but he will drop them after a minute or two.

6. At this stage your baby can coordinate his movements better and you will notice that the movements of his arms and legs, which were stiff, are becoming softer and more fluid.

Social-emotional development

1. The baby interacts with the person who talks to him by means of looking and eye movements, as if he is discovering the people around him. His gaze may remain fixed when he hears the voice of someone he loves.

2. A warm relationship is formed between the baby and his mother by the infant gazing at his mother.

3. You will have the joy of seeing your baby's first smile during this month, when you play with him and he realises that. This is not a random or coincidental smile as in the first month, and it brings great joy to the mother and father. The baby's first smile makes the parents' hearts leap with happiness.

You have been changing your baby's diaper, feeding him, kissing him and playing with him since he was born without seeing any response, then comes this long-awaited event when your baby gives a beautiful smile, which may make you very happy especially after so many sleepless nights.

Linguistic development

Your baby may make some random sounds.

The third month

Physical development

- There is better coordination in the arms and legs
- The baby can wave his arms and kick his legs, and is physically stronger because the joints of his hips and knees are now more flexible
- He can put his hands together and spread his fingers, but he uses his fist to hit dangling things such as suspended toys
- You will notice that your baby starts to grasp small soft toys and he may try to bring them to his mouth, but he quickly drops them
- The movements of his body have changed from involuntary to voluntary movements
- He turns his head more strongly than in the previous two months
- He starts to move his arms and legs on one side with coordination and control
- He can sit with support
- His hands remain unclenched most of the time
- He can hold a rattle if his mother puts it in his hand
- He wants to grab everything he sees

Social-emotional development (“Hello, I’m here!”)

- In this month the baby begins to want to stay with others and he cries if you leave him on his own, but he calms down and smiles if you pick him up and play with him.

- His sleeping pattern becomes more smooth and regular, and now you can get your share of sleep at night.

Linguistic development

The baby makes random sounds that he likes, such as “gha-gha-gha” and “ah-ah-ah”, and he is happy when you talk to him in his language.

Baby from 4 to 6 months

Feeding your baby

Introducing solid food

Is my baby ready to eat solid food?

Your baby is ready to eat solid food if:

- He can hold his head up. It is essential that your baby should be able to hold his head in an upright position in order to be able to eat his first food using a spoon
- His saliva is such that it makes it easy for him to swallow solid food
- He is able to sit up properly with help. Perhaps you should give him a little help to sit up, and later on he will be able to sit up in a high chair when he is able to sit up properly on his own
- He is able to chew food. Your baby should be able to chew the food in his mouth and swallow it. When he becomes able to swallow food properly, you'll notice that the amount of food that falls out of his mouth becomes less. By the age of six months your baby will probably have one or two teeth
- The baby feels hungrier than before, such as if he wakes up at night for an extra feed or asks for more milk.
- His tongue stops pushing the food out of his mouth. This comes a long time after you start giving him solid food, because usually in the beginning the baby tries to push the food out of his mouth. This is something very normal in the beginning.
- The baby should be at an ideal weight. Most children are able to eat semisolid food when they reach a weight that

is double their birth weight. Usually this happens before or when they reach the age of six months.

- The baby starts to show interest in the food that you are eating, such as if your baby begins to look at your food and play with it to such an extent that he will try to move it from the plate to his mouth

A few words of advice

1. Do not start giving your baby solid food too early. Before the age of four months he does not need anything other than breast milk, because his digestive system is not fully developed before this age, and his body is not able to digest and absorb food.

2. At the same time, do not delay introducing solid food if you feel your baby is ready for it, because delaying it will deprive the baby of many nutrients that he needs at this age, such as iron and vitamins B and D.

3. Try to give your baby very small amounts of food and introduce it gradually.

4. Do not force your baby to eat a certain kind of food. If he refuses some type of food the first time you offer it, do not force him to eat it; rather offer him a different type of food. As for the food that he refused, offer it to him again after a while; he may like it after a while and find that it tastes good.

5. Try to choose the right time to feed your baby, such as times when he is hungry and times when he is happy and in a good mood.

When should I start to add some solid food along with breast milk?

The World Health Organization advises starting to give the infant food that is complementary to breast milk between the ages of four and six months. The exact time may be determined by a pediatrician, based on the baby's rate of growth. If his rate of

growth is slow, it is advisable to introduce complementary foods, but if his rate of growth is normal, then it is advisable to wait until he is five months old

Introducing solid food

The best food to start with is grains such as rice, corn and wheat. It is best to start with rice because it does not cause allergy in infants. It is also easy to swallow and to mash into a purée. After that you can introduce corn, after cooking it and mashing it. Introducing wheat should be delayed until the beginning of the sixth month, because it contains gluten, a form of protein that may cause allergies in some children.

When you first offer your baby rice, give him a very small amount of rice using a plastic spoon, so that you will not hurt his mouth. In the beginning, the baby will spit the rice out, and this will happen repeatedly, but with encouragement he will accept it and will begin to enjoy the new food. You can also add some breast milk to the rice to make it easy for the baby to accept it in the beginning.

Do not add cow's milk to the rice at this stage, because cow's milk contains high amounts of protein, sodium and potassium, and these elements put increased pressure on the baby's kidneys at this stage. Moreover, cow's milk contains a large amount of fats which would place a burden on the baby's digestive system.

It is advisable to offer each new kind of food for five or six days before trying to introduce another kind of food, so that the baby will get used to each kind. This approach will also help us to find out if anything out of the ordinary is happening, such as allergies or sensitivity in the child towards this type of food. Symptoms of a food allergy may include:

- Rash or hives
- Nausea
- Stomach pain

- Diarrhea
- Itchy skin
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Swelling of the airways to the lungs
- Anaphylaxis

If you notice any such reactions in your child, stop giving him this food and offer him something else that you know is safe for him or unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. Keep track of your baby's reactions to different foods and consult your doctor for further advice.

A few words of advice

Do not add sugar, honey, salt or spices to the grains, because they are harmful to the baby at this stage.

Gradually increase the amount of food you give your baby, until you are giving him 2-3 spoons of grains every day.

Do not force your baby to eat any food he does not want; you can try again later on.

Remember: breast milk is still your baby's main source of nutrition at this stage. Solid food is complementary to mother's milk and is not a replacement for it.

Things to pay attention to when giving your baby solid food

1. Give him only one type of food in the first five days, until you are sure that your baby is not allergic to this food and that he accepts this food.
2. Do not give the baby a large amount of food; give him small amounts gradually.
3. Use fresh foods and avoid using canned or prepared foods.

4. Make sure that your baby is actually hungry, so that he will not push the food out of his mouth.
5. Offer him new foods every four days or so.
6. Avoid foods that are not mashed or puréed at this stage. You can give him foods with more texture in a few months' time.
7. Put the spoon in the baby's mouth in such a way that he can take the food from the spoon.
8. Dispose of foods kept in the fridge after one day or longer.
9. It is advisable to use a small plastic spoon so that you will not harm your baby's teeth.
10. If your baby is in a bad mood, it is better to give him food he likes and is used to, because he may refuse any new food that is offered to him.
11. It is better for the baby to eat natural sugars that are found in some fruits, dates and raisins and to avoid artificial sugars as much as possible.
12. Wash your hands thoroughly and wash the utensils and bowls you are going to use, so that the baby's food will not become contaminated.
13. Always encourage your baby when he is eating, by smiling and playing with him.

Foods that must be avoided during this period

1. Foods that contain high levels of protein, such as cow's milk. Cow's milk contains a small amount of vitamin C and E, as well as iron, but it also contains high levels of protein and saturated fats. These substances are very harmful at this stage, and too much protein leads to an antigen-antibody reaction.

What is an antigen-antibody reaction?

The intestines of the infant are more sensitive and more porous, hence proteins leak more easily into the bloodstream and interact with the immune system in the infant's body in the same way that the immune system reacts with germs. In other words, the infant's immune system treats the proteins as if they are germs and interacts with them on that basis. The more often the child eats that type of food the more his immune system reacts as if it is infected with a contagious disease. This is called an antigen-antibody reaction.

2. All kinds of legumes (including beans, lentils and peanuts) and tree nuts. Your baby has no need for these foods during this period because they contain proteins that may trigger allergic reactions. You should also keep these foods away from the baby so that he will not pick one up and put it in his mouth, which may cause him to choke if the bean or nut gets stuck in his throat.



3. Fried or fatty foods

4. Citrus fruits
5. Eggs and their derivatives
6. Onions and garlic
7. Honey, sugar, salt and all kinds of spices

Does solid food change the baby's stools?

You will notice a change in the color and smell of your baby's stools when you start to offer him solid food. This is something natural. But if you find that the stool has become so solid that it is causing pain to your child, then you should consult your doctor and also change the kind of food you are giving him, and give him fruits and vegetables instead. You can also give the baby some liquid, such as sips of cooled boiled water or diluted, unsweetened fruit juice.

How can I give my baby more kinds of solid food?

You have to introduce new foods gradually, one new food at a time. Your baby needs some time to get used to each new taste and texture.

This cautious and gradual approach in introducing new foods will give you the opportunity to notice any kinds of allergies that may appear in your child as a result of eating a particular food, such as diarrhea, stomach aches or skin rashes.

Try to add a new kind of food every few days, starting with fruits and vegetables that are easy for infants to digest.

Start by giving a few spoonfuls of fruits or vegetables to your baby in the same meal as some dried grains or other foods, such as boiled apple and mashed banana, or carrots and plums, or sweet potato, and white carrot. Try to get a smooth mixture by adding boiled and cooled water or breast milk or artificial milk. You can also try baby rice, wheat, oats or powdered grains. It is

preferable to avoid cucumbers, onions, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and the like until your baby is one year old, because they are difficult to digest. It is also advisable to avoid using spinach and beetroot because they contain high concentrations of nitrates; before the age of six months the baby's digestive system is not able to process these naturally occurring nitrogen/oxygen salt compounds.

If you encounter a negative reaction from your child towards some foods, then try again a few days later in the hope that he will accept them.

Feeding your baby in the fifth and six months

At this stage you can add some fruit to the baby's food, such as pears, apples, bananas, oranges (if they are not acidic) and plums. You can also add some other foods such as onions and potato.

Try to boil the food very well, then mash or purée it. Do not give your baby any food that is not puréed. Choose ripe fruits because they are easier to digest and can be puréed fully.

Offer new foods in small amounts until you are sure that there are no allergies to this food and that the baby will not regurgitate the food because he cannot accept it. Increase the amount of the new food gradually.

You can give the baby fruit juice such as banana, apple or peach juice, so long as you dilute the juice with water. The water should be boiled first, before adding it to the juice; this will make it safer for the baby's stomach. Give the water from a spoon at first, then let him drink from a cup if he is able to do so.

Do not mix two kinds of food until you have tried each on its own and made sure that there is no allergy to either kind.

You should not stop breastfeeding at this stage, because the baby still needs it.

If the baby refuses to let you put the spoon in his mouth, dip your finger in the food, then put it in his mouth and let him suck it. But if your baby continues to refuse the spoon, it may be because he does not like this kind of food, so you should give him another kind of food.

Feeding your baby in the sixth month

- You can give him fruit juice, such as apple juice. It is better to give him this juice in a cup; if the baby refuses to take the juice from the cup, then give it to him with a spoon instead.
- Do not add salt, sugar or honey to the baby food at this stage.
- Give him a teaspoon of puréed vegetables, then add to this amount gradually.
- Be careful not to give two types of vegetables together until after the baby has tried each one on its own.
- It is important to continue breastfeeding.

Development of the baby from 4 to 6 months

Four months old

Physical development

- When he lies down on his tummy, he can lift his head and chest using his forearms to carry the weight of his body.
- He can roll over.
- He can remain sitting, holding his head steady for a few minutes, if someone helps him to sit up.
- He pulls on his clothes when he plays.
- He will play with his rattle for a long time but he cannot pick it up if he drops it
- He tries to touch his toes with his hands when he lies on his back
- He picks up things and puts them in his mouth. Now your baby is able to pick things up and hold them even if he fails at his first attempt. He is able to grasp things firmly. When he holds something in his hand he will check it briefly and then put it in his mouth.

Social-emotional development

- The baby starts to laugh out loud when you play with him. He is attracted by colors and movement. He may smile at himself in the mirror. He may respond to the people around him, according to how comfortable he feels with each person. He may feel happy and calm down when he hears the Holy Qur'aan.
- The baby starts to play by himself. He can play with his hands and feet for a few minutes and you will realize that your baby has begun to entertain himself.

Linguistic development

- Research has shown that the baby understands the basic sounds of his mother tongue by the fourth month. Between the fifth and sixth months, his ability to make some sounds develops, such as “mama” and “dada”, but he does not yet connect them to either of his parents.
- He is now able to imitate others. If you say a two-letter word to him, such as “ma”, he will try to imitate it.
- The baby still makes sounds that he likes (“wah wah wah”). He is happy when you repeat what he says.
- Your baby may respond to your presence and your voice, and even your facial expression, by kicking his legs and waving his arms.
- The baby begins to show whether or not he is comfortable with the people around him. Give him enough time to get used to the faces of strangers. You will see that when he is in your arms he will want to interact with others, especially older children who make a lot of noise and trouble.

Five months old

Physical development

- You will notice that your baby is able to hold the bottle on his own with both hands.
- When he lies on his tummy he can lift his head and chest high off the ground.
- He is now able to pick up and hold onto objects and toys by himself, as the result of hand-eye coordination.
- He holds objects in his fingers and turns them over, and he usually drops them.
- Your baby is able to recognize small items and moving objects. Now he is able to recognize an object by seeing part of it. This is

the beginning of the game of peek-a-boo that you will play with him in the coming months.

Social-emotional development

- The baby is able to laugh out loud and is attracted by colors and movement. He may try to imitate the facial expressions of the people around him; so he will laugh when you laugh and frown when you frown. He is also beginning to develop curiosity and explore, and he is happy when he sees his toys and bottle.
- Your baby starts to show a strong attachment to you by raising his arms whenever he wants you to pick him up, crying whenever you leave the room, and he has begun to hug and kiss you. He is also beginning to develop a sense of humor, so he laughs when you do funny things, then he tries to make you laugh.

Linguistic development

- The baby makes new sounds and alternates between them, and he may try to repeat the sounds that he hears.
- Your baby knows where sounds come from, and he turns around every time he hears a new sound. The best way to attract his attention is to make a noise with a keychain or any other item that makes a sound.
- The baby watches your mouth when you speak, then he tries to imitate the different sounds and tries to pronounce consonants such as m and b.
- The five-month-old baby is able to recognize his name. You can see that he turns around every time you call him or speak about him in front of others.

Six months old

Physical development

- Your baby is able to hold onto small toys skillfully with one hand, using all the fingers together, and he may move the toy

from one hand to the other. He can hold one block, then he will look at another, and he will drop the block that is in his hand and pick up another one.

- He can move in all directions whether he is lying on his tummy or on his back.
- He can sit with a little help and remain balanced for a time.
- He can sit in a walker.
- He does not bend his knees when he stands.
- He can hold his bottle.

Social-emotional development

- At this age the baby realizes who is a stranger to him and he does not smile at them readily; he will cry if they try to touch him. He is strongly attached to his mother and he gets upset and cries if she leaves him on his own. He is also able to laugh out loud and he may prefer one toy over another.

Linguistic development

- The baby repeats short words or syllables that he has made up, and he may pick up other words. He pays attention when he hears his name.
- The baby is clearly able to imitate sounds.
- He murmurs and makes different sounds.

Your baby from 7 to 12 months

Nutrition in the seventh and eighth months

- In the seventh month, your baby is ready to eat more solid food; he is able to move his jaw and his teeth begin to appear. So you can introduce meat, egg yolks and legumes.
- When giving meat to your baby, remove the fat and cook the meat thoroughly in water, then drain it and puree it finely. Do not

add spices or salt to the meat. Give the baby just one teaspoon at first, then increase the amount gradually until he is eating 2-3 spoonfuls a day.

- When giving the baby legumes (lentils, fowl and other kinds of beans), you have to soak them in water overnight, then boil them thoroughly, then skin them, then puree them.
- Give the baby egg yolks only, not the whites.
- Do not stop breastfeeding.

Examples of ideal foods in the seventh and eighth months

To begin with, offer only one food at a time, and do not introduce another for four days or so, so make sure there is no allergy or sensitivity to the food. Once you know which foods your baby can eat, you can start to combine foods to make interesting “meals.”

Cereals



Rice, oatmeal and barley are often the first “solid” foods offered to babies. You can buy commercially produced mixes to which you just add previously-boiled water (follow the instructions on the packaging) or make your own by grinding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the grain (for oatmeal, do not use “instant” or “quick-cook” oats) in a food processor then simmering it with a cup of water for 10 minutes, whisking constantly.

Vegetables

Green beans, carrots, peas, squash, yam/sweet potato are all good and nutritious foods for your baby. Cook or steam the vegetable until tender, then puree it.

Fruits

Bananas, mango and avocado require no cooking. Simply peel, remove the seed or stone, cut into pieces and mash or puree it.

Papaya may need steaming to break down sugars and fibers, thus making it easier to digest.

Fruits such as apples, pears, etc. need to be cooked. Peel the fruit, remove the core or seeds, cut into pieces, then cook in a little water or steam until soft, then mash or puree.

Peaches, nectarines, plums, pears and apricots can all be baked. Once cooked, remove the skins and pits/seeds, then mash or puree.

Prunes can be soaked in warm water or steamed until they are plump and soft, then pureed in a food processor. Add plenty of water because they will tend to become gluey and pasty.

Some fruits should be delayed until the baby is older, such as melons (8 months) and strawberries (1 year).

Introducing meats and eggs should be also be delayed. If you are not certain about introducing a certain food, consult a doctor, pediatrician or public health nurse for advice, or consult a reliable print or online resource.

How can I help my baby sleep peacefully and comfortably?



You can do some routine things that will help your baby to sleep well, and you can help him not to wake up unnecessarily at night.

The most important of these things are:

1. A warm bath, which the baby will enjoy and it also helps to keep the baby clean
2. Playing gently with the baby; this will help him to go to sleep happy
3. Answer some questions and try to solve them so you can help your baby to sleep deeply:

- Is my baby hungry?
- Is my baby uncomfortable because of his diaper or anything else?
- Is there something bothering my baby such as loud noises or bright light that is disturbing him?
- Is my baby awake or in the stage of active sleep?

Crying

After the age of six months, the baby will start to cry less and you will have become an expert in ways of stopping him crying, because you will have seen the most of the signs that the baby is going to cry. So now you have experience in calming him down but nevertheless the baby will never stop crying altogether, for a number of reasons:

1. Teething and what accompanies this event of pain as the teeth come through the gums.
2. The baby may be upset by the introduction of solid food because he is not used to it yet. As time goes by he will start to appreciate and enjoy this food and will become less upset.
3. Your baby's crying may be an expression of something that he wants to say ("Mama, here I am, I want more attention").
4. The baby may feel that his mother is paying him less attention, so he uses crying to tell you of his feelings and needs. You are the most important person in his world and when you go away from him he cries and gets upset, but when you come back to him he feels happy.
5. The baby may feel bored because you are distracted from him by your household duties, so you should leave some toys with him that are suitable for his age. We will talk about toys below.
6. At the end of the first year, the baby starts to move, which leads to bumps and bruises as he attempts to explore the house, bedroom or wherever he is. Hence you must always try to make sure that the house is safe for your baby, to protect him from accidents.

General changes at this stage (7-12 months)



Teething

Many mothers believe that the teeth begin to appear after the child is born, but in fact the teeth start to grow in the fifth month of gestation. The infant will get twenty teeth, which are known as milk teeth. There are four front teeth, four molars and two canines in each jaw. Care of the baby's teeth begins in the fourth month of pregnancy; the mother's eating a nutritious and balanced diet is very important in the formation of the teeth.

The milk teeth begin to appear at the beginning of the sixth month and they continue to appear until the child is two and a half years old. If the appearance of the baby's teeth is delayed until the end of the first year, it is essential to consult a doctor. Teeth usually appear in the lower jaw before the upper jaw, but there may be individual differences between one child and another with regard to the order in which the teeth appear.

Common signs of teething

1. The gums appear inflamed and swollen
2. Excessive drooling and red cheeks
3. A slight cough
4. The baby wants to bite anything he can put in his mouth
5. The baby feels some pain when his teeth first penetrate the gum, which makes him drool
6. Irritability and bad temper
7. He chews solid things and sucks his fingers

There is a widespread belief among some mothers that teething is accompanied by diarrhoea, fever and chest infections, but in fact there is no direct connection between these symptoms and teething. Hence the mother should not ignore these symptoms just because they happen to occur at the same time as teething, and she should ask the doctor about these symptoms.

Taking care of the baby's teeth during and after the teething stage

Taking care of the milk teeth is important because they are more vulnerable to damage than the permanent teeth. Not taking care of them may have a harmful effect on the teeth that will take their place. To take care of the teeth, you must do the following:

1. Pay attention to giving the baby food that will provide the nutrients that will help the teeth to grow properly (calcium and vitamin D).
2. Do not stop breastfeeding, because mother's milk contains high levels of calcium, which is an important element in building the child's teeth.

3. You have to pay attention to cleaning the baby's teeth with a soft brush, using a gentle up-and-down movement. When cleaning the teeth, be careful not to hurt the gums.

Do pacifiers and teething rings help with teething?

Many mothers believe that pacifiers and sucking the fingers are helpful with regard to teething, but in fact pacifiers do more harm than good for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Using pacifiers has a harmful effect on the baby's jaw and milk teeth
- Pacifiers are easily contaminated and introduce germs into the baby's mouth which may cause disease
- Children who use pacifiers are more likely to have crooked teeth and problems with their bite

Finger sucking

Finger sucking is regarded as a habit in children that may start soon after birth and last until the child is weaned, and it may continue after weaning. That may be the result of anxiety felt by the child for some reason or it may be because he misses his mother's breast after being deprived of it by weaning. This is something normal in children, because since birth the infant has spent the first few months of his life relying on the habit of sucking. In this case I advise the mother not to rebuke the child for this habit, lest that increase his feelings of anxiety. Rather you should try to continue to breastfeed him for two years (if possible), because then he will have little need for the habit of finger sucking. If the habit of finger sucking continues, you should realize that it will quickly disappear after the child is weaned.

Reducing the pain of teething

If your baby is suffering pain because of his teeth breaking through the gum, you have to be kind to him, help him and help to reduce his pain by one of the following methods:

1. Rub the gum gently with your finger.
2. Apply some teething gel to reduce the pain when the tooth breaks through the gum; use a gel that is sugar-free.
3. Give your baby lots of cold drinks.
4. Give your baby a rubber teething ring to bite on; to get better results, put it in the fridge to get cold before giving it to the baby.
5. Use a remedy for teething such as chamomile drops.
6. If a rash appears under the baby's chin because of drooling, you can treat the rash with Vaseline.

When will my baby start remembering things?

Memory is the mental process by means of which a person can recall images, sights and sounds, and other things that have happened in the past or are happening at present. The memory is connective in nature because it connects the past with the present.

Memory is a mental process that the child develops at an early age. In approximately the second month the baby will give some responses which indicate that he remembers some people whom he sees or some simple actions that are done in front of him, but the memory at this age is limited.

One of the indications that babies remember simple actions is an experiment in which the researcher stuck out his tongue repeatedly in front of two-month-old babies, and they watched him with amazement. Twenty-four hours later, the researcher again entered the room where the infants were, keeping his tongue inside his mouth this time, but the infants started sticking out their tongues. It was as if they were saying: "We remember you; you did this!"

This is what is called recognition memory, or the child's ability to identify people and things that he has seen before; it develops more as the child grows.

The newborn baby is able to recognize the sound of his mother's voice from birth, because he got used to hearing it when he was in her womb. The baby who is breastfed is able to recognize his mother's smell from one week after birth. Within a few months, babies start to recognize familiar faces, such as the faces of the mother and father, and they prefer them to other faces. But this kind of memory only works when the child is able to remember something he knew from before; this is useful but it is limited.

With regard to retrieval and recall, i.e., the ability to remember specific details of experience, that begins between the ages of six months and one year. When your baby develops the power of retrieval, his memory will become stronger and he will have a clearer idea of the things he wants or what he wants to do. The first things that he will remember are things that interest him and happen repeatedly in front of him; he will remember where his toys are, and he will imitate actions he saw a week ago. At the same time he will send you a number of signals which indicate that he knows what is going to happen after his meal, for example, or when he has his bath or at bedtime. By this means he will show you that he remembers exactly what happened last time.

As the child grows older, his direct memory increases, and he will be able to store a lot of different images. In a scientific study, sixty images were shown during the course of one day to a group of four-year-old children; each image was shown for only two seconds. The following day, the children were asked to pick out the sixty images from among one hundred and twenty images. The result was that the average child gave the correct answer in 80% of cases. But the child will not develop long-term memory or memory of specific events until he is between fourteen and eighteen months old.

Another study that was carried out on children between the ages of five and six years showed that children of this age are able to remember words, movements, images and meanings; remembering clear words and phrases is also easier for them than remembering ambiguous or unclear words and phrases. The child is also able to recognize missing parts from a picture.

Child development 7 to 12 months

The seventh month

Physical development

- The baby begins to move his limbs vigorously; he will kick and push anything in front of him with his feet, and he will roll over from his stomach onto his back and vice versa.
- He tries to pull himself up into a standing position but is not able to do it.
- He holds onto objects with both hands for a longer period.
- He becomes happier when playing and is able to hold more than one toy at the same time.
- He is able to lift his upper body and may crawl backwards.
- When he is placed in a sitting position, we see that he is holding his head steady.

Social-emotional development

- The baby gets upset if strangers pick him up; he now recognises his mother, father and other family members around him. He likes toys that make soft sounds.

Linguistic development

- The baby listens attentively to the speech of the people around him and he may begin to make some unique sounds of three syllables such as “da-da-da” or “ba-ba-ba.”

The eighth month

Physical development

1. Children at this age are able to sit up without help.
2. Babies at this age are able to crawl.

3. When the child is placed on his stomach, he is able to roll over onto his back.
4. Your baby at this age may be able to stand up, supporting himself on the furniture.
5. The baby may need some help to sit down from a standing posture.
6. Your baby will be able to pick up small objects.
7. The baby is able to move his knees and wave his arms when standing.

Linguistic development

- The baby is now able to recognise some sounds, such as the sound made by a cat (“meow”) or a train (“choo-choo”).
- He starts to understand the meaning of the words “no” and “yes”.
- He turns around when he hears his name; if you child does not turn around when he hears sounds or his name, you have to take him to the doctor.

Social-emotional development

- The baby likes to be the centre of attention among the family.
- He gets worried and anxious if he is surrounded by strangers, especially if he is tired or upset, or when his mother is not nearby, and he begins to get worried. Even though it may be difficult for you to see your child upset, you have to let him experience this and leave him for a little while, then come back to him, so as to reassure him that you will come back every time. By doing that, you are helping him to develop a sense of confidence and the ability to establish a relationship with others.
- He likes his parents to pick him up when there are strangers around.
- The baby is more interested in his toys.

- The baby is happy if you sit with him and draw things for him and tell him short stories.
- The baby tries to imitate his father and mother, hence you must be careful about what you do in front of the children. Avoid arguing, yelling, violent actions or bad words, so that the child will not imitate you.
- At this age most children discover things by shaking, hitting, dropping and throwing them before going back to their usual habit of putting them in their mouths.
- The child likes to look at himself in a mirror.



The ninth month

Physical development

1. The baby tries to stand at this age without holding on to the furniture. When he manages to stand for the first time he will be very happy.
2. Now the child could move from standing to sitting.
3. The child can walk with support.
4. He starts to push buttons on toys with his fingers.
5. The child may be able to eat with a spoon.
6. You will notice that he is able to sit and stand, and make voluntary movements whilst sitting.

7. The child may try to crawl up the stairs.
8. If someone waves bye-bye to him, he can wave back.

Linguistic development

- You may hear him say “Mama” clearly for the first time
- The child repeats a lot of words and sounds but he does not understand their meanings yet.
- The child starts to understand the meaning of the word no, and he may enjoy doing things that you say no to.

Social-emotional development

1. The child is now able to express his needs and wants better than before. If you try to take away a toy that he likes from his hand, he will express his objection and may yell.
2. He is more able to understand the concept of height and space, and he may express a fear of high places.
3. The child is more attached to his mother, and if she goes away from him or leaves him with strangers, he will get upset and yell and he may cry for a long time.

The tenth month

Physical development

1. He may be able to stand by himself at this stage.
2. He moves about supporting himself on the furniture.
3. He climbs onto chairs and up the stairs.
4. He may be able to drink from a cup.
5. He moves toys from one hand to the other and throws toys forcefully.
6. At this age he starts to play with colored blocks.

Linguistic development

- He understands more words
- He may utter some simple words with meaning, so keep talking to your child even though that may seem silly sometimes. It is a brilliant way to foster his linguistic skills. When he utters a string of incomprehensible words, your response should be, "Really? How nice." You will find that he smiles at you and carries on talking, and you will soon notice some words or movements that you can understand, in addition to other types of communication such as pointing at things or mumbling.

Social-emotional development

- He understands the meaning of play and he likes you to play with him. One of the games that you can play with your child is "Peek-a-boo", where you cover your face and ask him, "Where am I?" Then uncover your face and say, "Here I am!"
- At this stage your child's social character becomes apparent. He may be a loving person who smiles broadly at everyone he meets, or he may be more shy and hide his face when a stranger comes to say hello to him.
- He may repeat movements and sounds to get your attention. He may wave goodbye when you head towards the door.
- On the other hand, the child will become more able to express happiness, joy, sorrow and anxiety.
- He can wave bye-bye, clap his hands and move his body.
- He can answer some questions that you ask him. If you ask him, "Where is Baba?" he may point to him.

The eleventh month

Physical development

1. He is able to stand on his own and bend down whilst standing.

2. He can climb the stairs.
3. He can drink from a cup.
4. He can squat.
5. He can crawl forwards energetically and he may crawl whilst carrying a toy in his hand.

Linguistic development

- At this age your child can say some words or make some sounds, and he may be able to use some words correctly, but most of his words are still repetition without understanding.
- He can imitate the pronunciation and tone of some words just as he imitates actions. He can respond to simple requests such as, "Please give me the ball" or "Give me a spoon." Help him to learn by giving him some simple instructions that are easy to follow.

Social-emotional development

- This is a month of discovery... He will discover cupboards, drawers, bags, his toy box and kitchen tools.
- Your child likes to look at books and turn the pages, and he will have a favorite that he likes to go back to all the time.
- He imitates the movements of older children.
- At this age the child distinguishes between things that upset you and things that make you happy, and he distinguishes between obedience and disobedience. If you tell him something and he does not do it, he is doing that deliberately.
- This is an age of setting limits. The child has to know his limits, but you should not be harsh. For example, do not let him take that second cupcake. You have to set limits for him now. If he pulls the cat's tail, for example, remove his hand and look into his eyes and say, "Don't do that, because it hurts the cat." Then teach him to pet the cat gently. Remember that his desire to explore is far stronger than his desire to listen to your warnings.

So it is up to you to protect him and teach him. Remember that what may look like disobedience is in fact nothing but natural curiosity and the desire to find out how things happen in this world.

- The child will object if anyone takes something from his hand, even if it belongs to another child and not to him.

The twelfth month

Physical development

1. Some children are able to walk at this age.
2. At this age the child is able to crawl more quickly.
3. It is natural for the child to fall down often when he first learns to walk.
4. He still prefers to crawl rather than walk at this stage.
5. He can look for a lost toy.
6. He tries to take off his clothes.
7. He plays with cans and tries to open them.
8. He climbs on the furniture.

Linguistic development

- Now he can say three or four understandable individual words, such as Baba, Mama, Dada.
- He understands the meaning of the following words: Go ahead, come here, look, no and go.
- You have to help your child make the connection between objects and their names. The more you do this the more your child will build a store of words. So keep talking to your child and give everything a name; you can also count the stairs as you climb them. Tell him the names of fruits, vegetables and colors in the store. In addition to that, read picture books to him and ask him

to point to the things he knows or tell you their names. Make him choose sometimes; ask him if he wants to wear the red socks or the blue socks, or if he wants to play with the blocks or the rings. The child may not answer, or he may surprise you.

Social-emotional development

- At this age, your child will start to establish his position among his siblings; he will also start to develop more self-reliance.
- At this age, he enjoys throwing everything on the ground. He will give you a toy and take another.
- He also likes to collect things in boxes then take them out. This also applies to pots and pans. He could put a small pan inside a large pan and he likes the loud noises they make.
- He likes to play with his peers more.
- He takes notice of the feelings of other people; he notices if his mother is happy or upset.
- The one-year-old child is like a teenager at the beginning of adolescence; he wants to be independent and move freely.
- The child starts to try to put a small toy in a small hole and he may put things up his nose.

Keeping your child safe

The more the child's movements develop, the more danger he is exposed to during his exploration of the house, the kitchen, the bedroom, the garden and so on.

Hence every time he learns a new skill, it means that you have to take a number of measures and precautions to keep him safe.

Necessary measures to keep your child safe

1. The first thing to do is look at everything around you in the house. You can sit beside your child on the floor so that you can see what he sees, and find things that could attract his attention and his desire to explore. Think of ways to protect your child from any dangers connected to those things.
2. Look again at how things are arranged in the house and organize them in such a way to keep your child safe.
3. Keep a close eye on your child's growth and development, both physical and mental, so that you will be aware of the dangers that your child may face as he grows and acquires new skills that he did not have before, such as crawling, walking and standing confidently.

Keeping your baby safe in the kitchen

The kitchen is regarded as the most dangerous place in the house, so if you can keep your child outside of the kitchen all the time then do so. But you should understand that it is very difficult to do that, hence you have to take the following precautions.

1. Do not leave kitchen utensils on the edge of the counter; rather put them at the back so that the child cannot reach them.
2. Do not carry the child whilst preparing food.
3. Keep knives, forks and spoons out of the reach of the child.

4. Put cleaning solutions, soap and other liquids in a high cupboard so that the child cannot take them and drink them.
5. Keep plastic bags away from the child lest he put them on his head and suffocate.
6. Do not leave the plugs of electrical appliances in the sockets so that the child cannot pull on them and make the appliances fall on him.
7. Do not leave hot things within the reach of the child, such as tea, coffee and any hot liquid.
8. Do not leave leftover milk in a bottle so that the child will not drink it.
9. Do not use a tablecloth on the kitchen table, lest the child pulls on it and whatever is on the cloth falls on his head.
10. Move electrical appliances away from water sources so that they do not cause electric shock; disconnect them as soon as you have finished using them.
11. Try to not let the floor get slippery or have any greasy or wet spots on it so that the child will not slip and fall.
12. Keep matches out of the reach of the child.
13. When the child reaches the stage of opening drawers and looking in them you have to put dangerous things such as knives in a high place that the child cannot reach.
14. The fridge, washing machine and dryer pose a danger that could be fatal if the child climbs into one of them, so you have to keep them firmly closed.

Keeping your baby safe in the bathroom

Never leave a small child alone in the bath because he is at great risk and could drown. Drowning is one of the main causes of death in young children and may occur even with a small quantity

of water and within a short time without the child making any noise or crying.

Safety measures in the bathroom

1. Bring and prepare everything that you need to give the child a bath beforehand so that you will not need to leave the bathroom to fetch anything.
2. Your child's life is more important than the ringing of the phone or the doorbell. If you must leave the bathroom, take the child out of the tub and wrap him in a dry towel, and take him with you when you leave the bathroom. (It cannot be emphasized enough: Never leave your child in the bathtub on his own, even for one second).
3. Empty the water from all vessels or from the bathtub as soon as you have finished using it.
4. Most cases of drowning occur in the toilet when it is filled with water and the child tries to look down into it, then he falls into the water because his head is the heaviest part of his body.
5. Get into the habit of keeping the lid of the toilet closed all the time. As an extra precaution, you could buy a toilet seat with a lock and lock it every time you have finished using the toilet.
6. You have to check the temperature of the water using a thermometer before you start to give your baby a bath. The temperature of the water should be around 37°C. Put the cold water in the bath first then add as much hot water as is needed
7. Keep the door of the bathroom closed at all times so that the child cannot enter the bathroom and be exposed to the dangers we have mentioned.

Keeping your baby safe in the bedroom

1. It is better for the infant to have a separate crib, because if the mother sleeps with the baby by her side, there is the risk of

suffocation if she rolls over onto him without realizing, especially if she tends to sleep deeply.

2. The temperature of the bedroom should be suitable so that the baby does not feel too hot or too cold.

3. Do not leave an electrical or gas heater on in the child's room when he is sleeping.

4. Do not put a pillow in your baby's crib. If you want to raise the baby's head a little, put the pillow under the mattress.

5. Do not leave a bottle in your baby's mouth when he goes to sleep.

6. Do not let the newborn sleep on his stomach so that he is not exposed to the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

7. Do not leave solid or hard toys next to your child so that he will not get scratched by them.

8. Keep an eye on your child's growth and development; always know the answer to this question: can the child climb over the side of the crib and fall from it or not?

9. Keep all sharp utensils (such as scissors, tweezers and other dangerous things) in locked drawers.

10. Do not use lightweight furniture in your child's bedroom, so that he cannot pull it over on top of himself.

11. It is better to buy furniture with rounded edges and to avoid sharp edges and corners that your child could crash into.



Keeping your baby safe in the house: general tips

1. Do not leave your baby alone in the room when the fire is lit or the stove or desk fan is on.
2. You and your husband should not smoke cigarettes in front of the child because this will expose him to harm; moreover he may wait for the first opportunity to imitate you.
3. Make sure that windows are secure and firmly locked.
4. Make sure that there are no ropes in the house so that your child cannot strangle himself. The same applies to the strings of window blinds and so on.
5. Try to keep tables free of glass and metal; do not put a cloth on the table that hangs down so that the child cannot pull it.
6. Try not to leave small items within the child's reach, such as coins, nuts, bobby pins, caps of pens, small batteries, olives and other things that the child could swallow and choke on.
7. Put covers on all electrical outlets in the house so that the child cannot stick his fingers in them.

8. Put rubber protectors on sharp edges and corners in the house so as to lessen the impact if your child crashes into those edges and corners.

9. Do not leave chairs or anything else the child could climb on next to windows.

10. If your baby is using a walker, it is advisable to watch him so that he will not be in danger of falling out of it.

11. It is essential to put a barrier gate on the stairs so that the baby will not attempt to climb up and down the stairs, which would expose him to the risk of falling.

Keeping your baby safe in the garden

1. Do not let your child play in an area where insecticides have been used.

2. Do not let your child play on chairs and benches that have sharp edges.

3. Do not let your child play with animals even if they are pets, because an animal may cease to be friendly at any moment. Try to take any pets to the vet for regular checkups.

4. Do not let your child play on his own near the paddling pool; it is better to empty the pool after using it.

5. Keep garden tools, insecticides and harmful plants in a secure area. It is better to cover the garden with grass or sand so that if your child falls he will not be hurt.

6. Watch your child all the time and teach him not to eat anything harmful such as sand and weeds.



Keeping your baby safe in the car

1. There are laws which state that child seats must be used in the car, and the car seat should be suitable to the weight and age of the child, and the seat belt should go around the child

comfortably and safely. You have to buy this seat and install it properly in the car; it is better to have it installed by a professional.

Note

In some countries, parents still think that the safest place for the child when he is in the car is on a parent's lap, but in fact this is more dangerous than letting him sit on his own. The child who is sitting on a parent's will be the most severely injured in an accident, because an adult cannot control his movement in a crash and the child will likely be crushed between the adult and the dashboard.

2. It should be noted that car seats for newborns should be placed on the back seat of the car, facing backwards.
3. The driver has to make sure that the doors of the car are closed properly and he should use central locking if the car has this feature.
4. Do not leave newborns alone in the car.
5. Be extra cautious when taking the child out of the car; take him out on the side that is closest to the sidewalk.
6. Make sure that the child is not exposed to harmful sun rays when he is in the car.

Important note for fathers and mothers

Make sure before driving the car that there is no child under the car or near it, because many children – especially those who have just learned to walk – tend to sit under the tyres of the car.

Keeping children safe when taking them outside

1. Do not let go of your child's hand for any reason. If the child is in a stroller and you cannot bring it into the place you want to

enter, then take him out of the stroller or do not go into that place.

2. If you lose your child when you are outside the house, contact the nearest police station immediately.

3. Try to teach your child gradually, without scaring him, not to wander off on his own and not to go with anyone who tries to convince him to go with him to any place.

4. Do not cross a street where cars travel at high speed with your child in a stroller, because drivers may not notice that you have a child in a stroller with you. (If a pedestrian crossing is available, use it instead of “jaywalking”.)

Your baby from one to two years old

Feeding your child

By the beginning of the ninth month your child will have got used to most kinds of food and you can give him some of what the family is eating, if it is free of spices, salt and sugar.

At the beginning of the tenth month until the age of eighteen months the child will become ready to eat food with his father, mother and family, but you should still take care to put the child's food in a separate dish and ensure it is free of spices and salt. This can be done by taking a portion of rice and meat and vegetables before adding spices or salt; after that you can add spices and salt for you and your husband

When is the right time to stop breastfeeding?

In most Western countries, mothers hasten to stop breastfeeding after the child reaches the age of six months. It is rare to find a mother who breastfeeds her child for more than six months.

I do not agree with this practice because the child still needs breast milk during the period when they stop breastfeeding. I think that preparations to stop breastfeeding should be made at the beginning of the second half of the second year of the child's life, and that breastfeeding should stop completely by the end of the second year. At this age the child will be happy to sit with the family and share their meals with them.

But stopping breastfeeding must be done gradually and slowly

Take the following steps:

1. Stop the mid-morning feed and replace it with a cup of water.
2. After a while, you can stop the lunchtime feed and replace it with solid food.

3. After three days you can replace the evening feed with a meal of fresh fruit and water.

4. After that, there can still be a few feeds at various times. Reducing these can be done gradually by distracting the child at times when he wants to come to you to breastfeed. You can ask your husband to take the child and play with him outside the house or take him out for some fresh air. After a few days you will have completely stopped breastfeeding.

Taking care of milk teeth

Causes of cavities in milk teeth

1. The main reason for cavities in milk teeth is eating processed sugar in large amounts.
2. Consumption of carbonated beverages.
3. Eating a lot of cookies, chocolate and sticky sweets.
4. Not paying attention to breastfeeding.
5. Unbalanced diet, which leads to a lack of iron, calcium and phosphorus in the child's body.
6. Not paying attention to cleaning the child's teeth, and leaving food particles between the teeth.

Protection against cavities in milk teeth

7. You have to protect your child as much as possible from consuming hidden sugar such as sucrose (sugar from sugar canes and sugar beets), glucose or dextrose (grape sugar), lactose (milk sugar) and fructose (sugar from dried fruits such as raisins).
8. Sugar is less harmful if it is eaten as part of a meal, because fats help to protect the teeth from the effects of sugar. Saliva also helps to clean sugar from the surface of the teeth and re-cover the teeth with enamel.
9. The child should be encouraged to eat healthy meals and to keep away from sticky sweets such as toffee and caramel, dried fruits such as raisins, and mint flavored chewing gum, because that leads to the teeth being exposed to sugar for a longer time as a result of the viscosity of these foods.
10. We can allow the child to have a small amount of sugar-free gum because that stimulates production of saliva.
11. Drinking milk and diluted fruit juice instead of fizzy drinks that contain citric acid, phosphoric acid and other harmful ingredients.

12. Visiting the dentist for regular checkups to make sure there are no cavities in the child's teeth and get some advice on how to take care of the child's mouth and teeth, and treat cavities if they appear.

When should the child move from the crib to a bed?

The right time for the child to move from the crib to a bed is when he is able to climb out of the crib, which carries the risk of falling. Also if the child feels upset because he is restricted in the crib which has become somewhat annoying to him, at that point it becomes necessary to move him to a regular bed. This usually happens when the child reaches the age of two years or more.

Pampering the child

Will my pampering spoil the child?

Is it wrong to give the child everything he wants all the time?

Will being soft with my child make him a weak character?

All of these questions occur to most mothers.

The truth of the matter is that pampering of children occurs in two stages:

Pampering the baby in the first few months of life

During this period, the mother should not be afraid of spoiling her child by pampering him too much. If the baby cries a great deal or does not want to go to sleep, you have to pick him up, walk with him, cuddle him and pamper him however you want, because at this stage he may be feeling pain, colic or tension and he needs more help and care.

There is the possibility that by moving the child, distracting him and applying gentle pressure to his tummy when you carry him, you may make the baby forget the feelings of pain and tension, even if it is only a little.

Pampering the baby at this stage gives him a sense of confidence and security in the world that surrounds him.

Pampering the baby once he is past the age of 6 to 9 months

At this stage you have to understand that it is essential to withhold something from the child if doing so is in the child's best interests; do not regard that as being cruel to him because you know what is in his best interests.

For example, a mother who cannot bear to hear her child crying even for half a minute may carry him all the time, then when she wants to do any house work she will find it impossible, because the child has become more persistent after getting used to his mother carrying him all the time.

Something similar may be said concerning the child who persistently asks his mother for some kinds of food such as candy and chips.

Dr. 'Azeedah al-Sayyid, Professor of Psychology and Head of the Social and Psychological Consultation Unit in the Girls' College of Ain Shams University, says:

Excessive pampering may also spoil the child because he has got used to everyone fulfilling his demands all the time, so he will be unable to delay fulfilling his demands, which may lead to formation of an unstable character that cannot put up with any pressure or any delay fulfilling its wishes. This will cause him to make a lot of mistakes and will generate feelings of selfishness; he will be unable to form social relationships with others or put up with responsibilities that he will face in the future; he will think that everything is permissible and nothing is forbidden. And when he goes out into the real world he will not be able to deal with rules and regulations and he may transgress them.

Dr. 'Azeedah al-Sayyid warns parents against being inconsistent when dealing with their children, because not being consistent and alternating between strictness and leniency will cause a great deal of confusion in the child.

Small children can be very smart and may resort to getting more from each parent on his or her own. The mother may allow something that the father does not and vice versa.

Hence the parents have to agree between themselves on a unified approach in raising children so that the child will not become confused.

Excessive strictness creates a hostile character that cannot form successful relationships with others; such a character hates authority in general. The mother, who gets angry, loses her temper and starts hitting the child and calling him horrible names makes him feel that he is not safe and causes him to feel insecure.

Adults may try to justify their strictness with children by saying that they are trying to make them ideal in behavior, but this strictness has the opposite effect and the child becomes apathetic.

Common problems in children at this stage – prevention and cure

Aggression in children – causes and remedy

Aggression refers to behavior that causes harm to other people. Berkowitz thinks that aggression results from extreme frustration due to negative feelings.

Characteristics of the aggressive child

- The aggressive child cannot express his feelings
- He does not accept criticism
- He is introverted and frustrated
- He is emotionally immature

Causes of aggression in children

1. Imitation of aggressive behavior that he sees

For example from his father, siblings or mother. Studies have shown that aggressive behavior on the part of the father or mother plays a major role in the development of aggression in their children.

Family disputes

And what results from them of divorce. Studies carried out by Kokus in 1979-1980 showed that there is a connection between divorce of the spouses and development of aggressive behavior in children because of pressure and conflict in the home, as a reaction to this negative environment.

Watching violent scenes on television

Or in computer games that are based on fighting, hitting and aggression towards others

Differences in the way children in the same family are treated

Some parents treat a child who is good-looking, clever or obedient more favorably than a homelier, slower or more stubborn sibling. This is to be avoided, because it has a negative impact on the “less-favored” child’s psychology and behavior.

Parent’s ignorance of proper methods of raising children

Some examples of that include the following:

- The father rewarding the child who uses violence, such as saying to him: “Take what is your right because you are a man”
- Parents spoiling the child to a great extent by giving him everything he wants, which makes him get used to having everything he wants; this leads to aggression when his wishes are not met.
- Father and mother using threats and hitting in dealing with their child at home.
- Social inclination towards aggression; the more the crime rate in society increases the more the child is inclined to become aggressive.

Ways of dealing with aggression

- Make the child aware that his behavior is not acceptable to others.
- Do not hit the child or yell or scream at him, but at the same time do not be too lenient.
- Punishment has negative consequences; corporal punishment will convince the child that hitting is something acceptable, and verbal punishment will make him feel inadequate and make him lose self-confidence, which may lead to aggressive behavior.

- Teach the child the difference between his rights and the rights of others, and between his possessions and the possessions of others.
- The aggressive child should not be given any reward so that this behavior will not be reinforced and other children will not imitate him. Punishment may take the form of a five-minute “time out” from social activities that may be increased or decreased, or ignoring him. But corporal and verbal punishment should be avoided.
- Channel the child’s aggressive energy in a different way. The best way of channeling a child’s energy is sports, because sport can turn destructive energy into constructive energy.
- See what your child is watching, including cartoons, whether that is on the television or on videos and DVDs, as well as computer games. Many of these movies and so on contain violent scenes or indirectly encourage violence.
- Set a good example for your child to follow and do not show marital or family disputes or problems in front of the child.

Stubbornness in children – causes and remedy

Parents have to realize that stubbornness exists in all children, but the level and strength of stubbornness may vary. A reasonable amount of stubbornness is regarded as something normal and you should not worry about it. But if stubbornness has become a way of life for the child, that is objectionable because this may develop into other patterns of behavior that are more serious than stubbornness.

Kinds of stubbornness in children

- Stubbornness combined with inflexible opinions and rigid thinking. The child does not like to do anything but what he wants to do, even if what he wants is not correct or is not compatible with logic and reason.
- Stubbornness in which the child refuses to pay attention to important matters such as cleanliness, washing the hands before and after eating, and sleeping at a set time. The child sticks to his guns and rejects the instructions or requests of adults.

Causes of stubbornness in children

1. Parents always rejecting the child's wishes, which generates a desire to take revenge by means of stubbornness.
2. Mistaken interpretation by the parents of stubborn behavior, which they think is a sign of strong character in the child; this in turn reinforces this behavior.
3. Marital discord which leads to tension for the child.
4. Forcing the child into a particular pattern of eating, dressing or behaving (etiquette) that is too much; this motivates the child to rebel and be stubborn.
5. Excessive pampering of the child.

Dealing with stubbornness in children

- Do not respond to the child's stubbornness with more stubbornness on the part of the parents, because that will reinforce this behaviour in the child; rather we have to communicate with him and try to convince him.
- Respond to reasonable requests made by the child, so that the child will respond to the parents' requests.
- The parents have to ignore minor stubbornness and not get into arguments with the child.
- Praise the child when he responds to requests from the mother or father.
- Avoid wrong parenting methods such as excessive pampering or forcing the child into a particular style of manners, dressing or eating.
- Let the child show some opposition if it is minor and is not rude; the parents should set the example to follow.

Fear in children – causes and remedy

Fear is something that all human beings feel; it is a powerful and unpleasant psychological state that results from being aware of the presence of some danger or expecting danger to occur. Children may be afraid of things that may seem ordinary and non-threatening to adults; if the child's fear is reasonable there is nothing wrong with it.

But if the fear is illogical or excessive, this is an abnormal pathological type of fear (i.e., phobia). The main causes of phobias are psychological disorders and excessive anxiety and tension.

Types of fear in children

- Fear of strangers
- Fear of separation from the mother or caregiver
- Fear of animals, the dark, thunder and lightning
- Fear of things that exist only in the child's imagination
- Fears that are connected to something – the cause of the child's fear may be arguments between his father and mother, and this fear becomes attached to a specific object such as a toy or being alone, because of some connection between the cause of the fear and that thing.



Causes of fear in children

1. Exposure of the child to a specific incident, such as a traffic accident, an animal such as a dog coming close to him, or the sudden death of a relative.
2. Seeing one of his parents being afraid of a specific animal or insect, or of the dark. The child will imitate his parents and be scared of the same things.
3. Marital arguments between the father and mother.
4. Seeing scary programs and movies on television.
5. Physical weakness in the child that exposes him to fear more than the child who is strong.
6. Constant criticism of the child which causes him to lose self-confidence.
7. Aggressiveness in dealing with children and demanding things that they cannot do.
8. Child trying to attract his parents' attention by means of fear, so that he can get more of their attention and care.

9. Joking with the child about things that are not real, such as saying to him, "I like your fingers and I'm going to take them and keep them with me." The child may take it literally and become afraid of that person or that particular joke.

10. Parents threatening the child if he does not do something or if he does not stop doing something and they say "I am going to smack you" or "I am going to punish you."

11. Some mothers resort to scaring their children in wrong ways, such as saying to child: "If you go outside the house, the cat will eat you" or "strangers will take you."

Dealing with fears in children

1. Parents have to instill feelings of security and confidence in their children; they should try to understand the things that the child is afraid of and dispel this fear.

2. They should not use physical punishment with the child for any reason. For example, if the child is scared of mice the mother can talk to her child and tell him that the mouse will not harm him. She can look for some pictures of mice and show them to the child to dispel his fear, then bring a toy mouse for the child to touch and play with. However, if the child is upset or distressed by that, then it can be delayed until another time when he is more ready for it.

3. They should not make fun of the child's fears; rather they should try to calm him down and reassure him.

4. The parents should set an example; they should not show their fear of anything in front of the child so that the child will not imitate them. In addition to that, they have to create a calm and stable atmosphere in the house so that the child will not develop psychological problems.

5. The parents should not encourage the child when he yells about anything or is afraid of anything. This encouragement may come in the form of excessive attention to the child when he is

afraid, which will reinforce his feelings of fear. Rather they have to calm him down in a balanced manner, without exaggerating, so that the child can be helped to extinguish these feelings.

6. The parents should encourage the child to speak about experiences and things that bother him, so as to reduce the fear of that or the fear of similar experiences in the future.

7. They should avoid scaring the child when wanting him to do something that he does not like, such as when the mother says, “If you do not go to sleep, I will bring So and so [a person whom he does not like]”, because that will make him feel anxious and harbor negative feelings towards that person.

8. The mother should buy storybooks for her child that speak of the bravery of heroic children without scaring him; she should sit with her child and tell him the story so as to instil positive feelings towards courage and overcoming fear.

9. If the child’s fear continues and becomes abnormal (i.e., phobia), then take him to a psychiatrist or psychologist.



Jealousy in children – causes and remedy

Jealousy is something normal in children, as it is a childish instinct. But we have to differentiate between normal jealousy and abnormal jealousy. Normal jealousy is something that children feel but try to hide, and it is manifested in some simple patterns of behavior. As for abnormal jealousy, it is excessive jealousy that is manifested in some negative and violent patterns of behavior in the child, who may harm others.

Most important manifestations of jealousy in children

- Attempting to attract attention by regressing to drinking milk from a bottle
- Sleeping in his mother's bed or hitting his brother
- Wetting the bed at night
- Clinging to his mother and staying in her lap

Causes of jealousy in children

1. Arrival of a new baby, especially if the mother neglects the child in order to look after the newcomer.
2. Comparisons between siblings, for example when the father tells one of his children that he is clever or handsome or strong, and does not say that to the other child. Comparing the children's school grades and scholastic achievements also fans the flames of jealousy among children.
3. The child may be jealous of an older sibling whose belongings are passed down to him and are replaced with new things. Many parents follow the practice of "hand-me-downs", giving things that the older child has grown out of to the younger child without knowing how this affects the psychology of the younger child and makes him feel inferior.

4. Harsh treatment on the part of parents and using negative means of telling off whenever the child picks on his younger sibling.

5. Instilling selfishness in children as the result of following wrong methods in parenting and socializing the child.

Types of jealousy in children

Jealousy appears in children in different ways, such as the following:

1. Constant crying, tampering with the belongings of others and destroying sibling's toys.

2. In some children, jealousy is manifested in ways that annoy the mother, such as refusing to eat food offered to him even though the child is hungry. This may upset the mother and make her more worried about her child and care for him more.

3. Clinging to the mother no matter how often she tries to push him away, especially when he feels that she wants to feed the new baby.

4. Using criticism and insults directed at anyone who opposes him.

Dealing with jealousy in children

1. Do not treat children differently.

2. Do not compare one child with another, even if the aim is to encourage the child.

3. Encourage children to cooperate and reward the child who is cooperative.

4. Avoid making fun of the children.

5. Try not to show excessive care towards the newborn especially in front of his siblings.

6. Do not make the child feel that the newborn needs a lot of time to care for him and that this forms a barrier to fulfilling the needs of the older child.

7. Teach the child some cooperative games, such as building a house out of blocks with his brother, and when they are done give them a reward to encourage them, making sure that the reward given to one child is equal to the reward given to the other.

Bedwetting – causes and remedy

Bedwetting (enuresis or involuntary urination) is regarded as one of the most widespread disorders in children, but at what stage do we say that the child has the problem of bedwetting?

- Most children are able to sleep through the night without a diaper by the age of two or three years. But studies indicate that 20% of children continue to wet the bed until the age of four. By the age of five we find that 17% of males and 13% of females are still wetting the bed.
- Bedwetting is regarded as a problem at the age of four years. When the child reaches this age, if he still has this problem then he must be taken to a doctor to examine him and find out the causes of this problem.

Note

There is no connection between this problem and the child sleeping deeply or not. Even children who sleep deeply can wake up when their bladders tell them that they are full.

Causes of bedwetting

Physical causes

Such as a bladder infection, small size of the bladder, anemia and intestinal worms.

Psychological causes

These are the most important causes of bedwetting and include the following:

Arrival of a new baby in the family. In this case the child is regressing. Regression results from being faced with an obstacle that prevents fulfillment of a need that he cannot overcome, and is a reflection of frustration and disappointment. The cause of the child's regression in this case is his feeling that there is someone

else who is competing with him for care and attention, so he resorts to anything that will attract attention.

- Fear of the dark and nightmares.
- Lack of harmony between the parents and ongoing fighting between them.
- Harsh treatment from the father and mother towards the child because of this problem, in which case the child's reaction may take this form in response to the bad treatment and the attitude of the parents which is filled with harshness or cruelty. In that case the child feels happy and feels that he has attained a kind of victory by upsetting others in the house with his bedwetting.
- Fear of something that he has seen on television that made him feel tense.

Prevention and cure

1. Support and encourage the child if he remains dry all night by giving him specific rewards or kind words; by the same token do not show that you are upset if he cannot stay dry yet.
2. Teach the child how to tell when his bladder is full by telling him to drink a lot of liquids during the day until he feels that his bladder is full and learns to recognize this feeling.
3. Create a suitable atmosphere in the home.
4. Tell his siblings not to make fun of him.
5. Do not resort to threats or punishment if the child urinates.
6. Parents should understand that attention, care, love, compassion, and feeling safe and calm form the basis of dealing with bedwetting.
7. Pay attention to what the child may be watching on TV or seeing in electronic games of violent scenes, killing, wrestling and so on.

8. Reduce the amount of drinks for a suitable period of time before the child goes to sleep.
9. Wake the child up during his sleep to go to the washroom, but do not go to extremes in that.
10. If this problem continues with the child, then take him to the doctor to find out what is causing it and how to deal with it.

Delay in speaking – causes and remedy

Many fathers and mothers eagerly wait to hear the first word uttered by the child (Baba... Mama....). Then after that they eagerly wait for the child to start speaking in full sentences.

But there are some children who suffer from the problem of delayed speech; we may find a child who does not say his first word until his third or fourth year.

That may be due to several causes, such as the following:

1. Weak or impaired hearing. This is the main cause for speech problems in children, and the extent of this problem depends on the severity of hearing loss and when it occurred. There are some children who have no hearing or impaired hearing from birth, and there are some who lose their hearing after acquiring a lot of language skills.
2. Low mental ability; children who have a low level of intelligence suffer from a delay in language and find it difficult to speak early. The severity of language delay is greater in children who have an intellectual disability. This group has a clear weakness in acquiring language skills and their linguistic development is slow.
3. Abnormalities in the faculties used in speech, such as the tongue or vocal chords.
4. Feelings of insecurity in the child because he does not get enough love and care.
5. Children who are raised by servants and nannies, especially those who do not speak the mother tongue at all or who speak it incorrectly. Thus the child falls victim to his parents being too busy to care for the child and their relying on nannies and servants.

6. Parents being too busy with work and leaving the child in daycare for a long time.

7. Bilingualism, such as if the parents are living in a country where the family's language is not spoken, especially if the parents use both languages or if the family's language is not used in the environment in which the child finds himself, such as with neighborhood children or family friends who have an impact on the child's acquisition of language skills.

8. Excessive shyness in the child.

Prevention and cure

1. Make sure that the child is able to hear properly.

2. Speak to the child with the correct and clear pronunciation, using short and repetitive sentences.

3. Listen to the child until he finishes speaking, even if his words are not clear or comprehensible yet. Give him the opportunity to express his feelings and try to understand what he is trying to say.

4. Get close to the child when you want to talk to him so that he can focus on your face and expression. Your words to the child should be full of love and kindness, in a happy atmosphere.

5. Do not force the child to speak because this will have the opposite effect.

6. The vocabulary that you use with your child should refer to tangible things such as people or images or things in his environment.

7. Wait for your child to answer if you ask him a question; give him a few seconds until you see whether he has something to say, that may come out as sounds or as a movement of his body or hands.

8. Do not let your work distract you from speaking to your child. You have to speak to him all the time.

9. Help your child by bringing him a private tutor in the form of a child who is a little older than him, so that he can talk to him. At this age children help one another to learn language.

10. Do not deprive your child of opportunities to play with other children like him.

11. If the child's speech is delayed in the second year, you have to take him to a specialist doctor.

12. Do not let the child see that you are upset by his not speaking, because this will only make matters worse.

Stuttering – causes and remedy

Stuttering is regarded as a speech problem in children and it is a widespread phenomenon among children between the ages of two and four years. It may last for a long time and may have a negative effect on the child's psychology and also that of his parents. It is preferable to deal with it early on, by implementing a program at home to help the child overcome this problem.

Causes of stuttering

1. There may be a physical cause that led to the child stuttering, such as hearing problems.
2. Psychological causes such as extreme shyness, fear and introversion.
3. Harsh treatment by the parents towards the child because of the stuttering, which only makes it worse.
4. Forcing the child to speak from a young age before he is ready for that.
5. Marital disputes and ongoing arguments between the parents; this causes tension in the child.
6. Not feeling safe, fear of punishment, or refusal to accept what is going on. All of these are qualities that may lead the child to stutter.

Prevention and cure

1. Do not show the child that you are upset because of his stuttering, whether through your words or facial expression.
2. Do not force the child to correct his words.
3. Give the child the opportunity to express what is on his mind and listen to him until he finishes speaking.

4. Encourage the stuttering child to speak in front of other small children, then in front of older and older children until he regains his self-confidence.
5. Do not correct the child's pronunciation or ask him to repeat the sentence lest that increase his sense of panic and confusion.
6. It is better to ignore this problem whilst encouraging the child.
7. If this problem continues then you have to consult a speech pathologist to find out the real cause and proper remedy.

Delay in walking

There are many factors that determine the age at which the child becomes able to walk on his own, such as hereditary factors, sickness and so on. But most normal children start to walk by the end of the first year and continue trying until they succeed in walking on their own at the age of approximately one and a half years. But this is not a fixed age; some children begin walking earlier than that, at the age of nine months for example; in other cases, the child does not take his first steps until after he has passed the eighteen month mark.

Causes of that include the following:

- Child relying too much on the baby walker, which may delay self-reliance in walking. However, if there is still a delay in walking after that, you should take the child to the doctor.
- Lack of self-confidence in the child and fear of failure after having failed in any attempt. Hence you have to try to give him confidence and hold his hand until he gets used to standing and starts to take his first steps.
- A child may be late in walking because he prefers to crawl, as crawling may protect him from dangers that he may be faced with when he first starts to walk. The mother has to encourage the child to walk by making repeated efforts to make him stand on his feet whilst he is crawling.
- Walking may be delayed because of the child being carried all day and not being given the opportunity to try to walk.
- The child may be slow in learning to walk because he is overweight, due to the mother giving the child too much rice pudding, corn starch, sweets and so on, which leads to obesity in the child and his not being able to take his first steps.

- The reason why the child is not walking may be new shoes that the mother has put on him, which may be uncomfortable or may make him slip every time he tries to stand. Hence it is better not to use shoes before the child learns to walk.

When is a child regarded as late in walking?

- You have to differentiate between delays in walking and problems in walking.
- The child is regarded as late in starting to walk if he reaches the age of one and a half years and has not yet started to try to walk. But you should wait until he reaches the age of two years before you can say that your child has a problem with being late in walking.

Causes of delay in walking in children

1. One of the most significant reasons why a child is late in walking is hereditary factors, so the first thing the doctor will ask you is whether the child has a sibling, parent or relative who has a problem walking.
2. The child may have a sickness such as meningitis, brain infection or disease of the central nervous system.
3. Lack of vitamins, proteins and other important nutrients.
4. Disease that affects the muscles such as Hoffman disease and early muscular atrophy.

Is there a remedy for delay in walking?

You do not have to do anything to teach your child to walk, because when he reaches the right age and his muscles, nerves and morale are ready, you will not be able to stop him walking. If the child is not walking by his second birthday, then you have to take him to the doctor to carry out the necessary tests.

Will the baby walker help my child to walk?

Many mothers believe that the walker helps children learn how to walk early. In fact it does not help in walking; rather it may pose an obstacle to learning how to walk. How is that? Doctor Spock says:

All children push their feet forward without paying attention to the issue of balance. It is well known that the act of walking requires various skills that the child may not be ready for. In the end the child will reach his goal by his own efforts so why should he learn something new, namely walking, if walking is more difficult?

Add to that the fact that walkers are not recommended in general because of the fear that the child may fall out of them. Walkers are responsible for many accidents because they let the child move very quickly and expose him to the risk of falling down the stairs. Hence I do not recommend them at all.

Bowleggedness

Bowleggedness in children is a widespread problem and causes a great deal of anxiety in parents. But in fact it is a common problem and is not connected to sickness in most cases; the legs will go back to normal automatically within two or three years.

Causes that may lead to bowleggedness

Physiological causes

Because of the position of the foetus in the mother's uterus, such as if the legs of the foetus are crossed inside the uterus.

Non-physiological causes

- Problems in the growth of the shinbone
- Lack of vitamin D in the child's diet which leads to rickets
- One leg being longer than the other
- Problems in the bones or joints
- Broken bone or dislocated joint
- Untreated osteomalacia (soft bones)
- Extreme obesity

Remedies

1. If the bowleggedness continues then you have to take the child to the doctor, who will be able to distinguish between pathological bowleggedness and ordinary physiological bowleggedness.

2. In the case of osteomalacia (soft bones), the remedy is giving the child calcium and vitamin D.

3. Exposing the child to sunlight for a certain length of time in ways that will not harm him.

4. If these remedies do not succeed, then the legs may be to be straightened by surgical means.

the platter: “O child, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand and eat from that which is close to you.”

5. Not eating whilst lying down or reclining, so that proper respect may be shown to the food.

6. Praying for the host when one has finished eating. When the Prophet (S.A.W) was invited to a meal and he had finished eating, he would say to his host: “May fasting people break their fast with you, may righteous people eat your food and may the angels pray for you.”

7. Not starting to eat before the adults start.



Etiquette of greeting (salaam)



1. The parents have to teach the child that the etiquette of greeting with salaam is part of Islam and that it increases love and affection among people. They should teach the child the hadeeths of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) that speak of the virtue of greeting others with salaam, both those one knows and those one does not know. The Prophet (S.A.W) said: "Spread (the greeting of) salaam amongst yourselves." And he said: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you of something that if you do it, you will love one another? Spread (the greeting of) salaam amongst yourselves."
2. They have to teach the child how to greet with salaam. The one who greets first should say "as-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-Allahi wa barakaatuhu (peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings)."
3. They have to teach him the etiquette of greeting with salaam: one who is riding should greet one who is walking; one who is walking should greet one who is sitting; the small group should

greet the large group; and the younger person should greet the older person.

4. They should tell the child not to use western styles of greeting (such as “good morning”, “good evening”, “bye bye” and so on). All of these wordings are alien to us and have come in from Western countries. The Muslim child should use the greeting of salaam that the Prophet (S.A.W) instructed us to greet one another with. The parents should set the example for the child to follow.

5. They should teach the child that returning the greeting is obligatory upon every Muslim.

6. The greeting of salaam should be given to everyone, whether one knows them or not.

Etiquette of sneezing

1. We have to teach the child to say “al-hamdu Lillah (praise be to Allah)” when he sneezes and to say “Yarhamuk Allah (may Allah have mercy on you)” if he hears someone sneezing. The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: “If one of you sneezes, let him say, ‘al-hamdu Lillah’ and let his brother or his companion say to him ‘Yarhamuk Allah.’ If he says ‘Yarhamuk Allah’ to him, then let him say ‘Yahdeekum wa yuslih baalakum (may He bless you and rectify your condition).”

2. We have to teach him to put his hand or a handkerchief over the mouth and make as little noise as possible.

3. He should say “Yarhamuk Allah” three times, if someone sneezes repeatedly. But if he sneezes more than three times, then he is sick and there is no need to say “Yarhamuk Allah.”

Etiquette of yawning

1. The child should be taught to try not to yawn if possible.

2. If he does yawn, then he has to put his hand over his mouth.

3. He should not make a loud noise when yawning.

Toilet training

The child has to be taught how to use the toilet when he feels that he needs to urinate, and the mother has to help the child understand this matter by patiently training the child without using force as he learns to use the toilet.

How do I know that my child is ready to start toilet training?

1. The child feels distressed when his diaper gets dirty.
2. He is able to stay dry for at least two hours.
3. He is able to understand some simple instructions such as Go, Come, Give me, etc.
4. He is able to take off and put on his clothes on his own without any help.
5. There are clear physical indications in the child's body when he wants to urinate, such as pulling at his clothes, sitting or squatting, or he tells you that he wants to urinate.
6. The child is able to sit and walk without help.
7. He wants to please his parents and play a positive role.

What is the right age for my child to start using the toilet?

There is no specific age to start toilet training with your child, but if you feel that your child has developed the necessary physical skills and mental and sensory capacity for toilet training, then you can start teaching him how to use the toilet. That is usually between the ages of 18 and 24 months, but there are some children who do not have the necessary skills to start toilet training until the age of 3 or 4 years.

Step-by-step guide to toilet training

Step 1

Buy what you will need for toilet training. One of the first things that you will need to buy to help train your child is a potty. You can also buy some small things to give your child as rewards to encourage him every time he uses the potty successfully. You can also buy picture books or DVDs from which your child can learn how to use the toilet.

Step 2

Teach your child to tell you when he feels he needs to urinate, but do not expect this to happen quickly. Before that happens, he will start telling you that he wants to urinate, but that would be after the fact. In that case you must not rebuke him or scare him. You have to remember that this may take some time, and that it will be successful sometimes but not at other times.

Step 3

Teach the child the names of parts of his body and the names for urine and faeces etc., so that he will understand what you are saying when you are teaching him how to use the toilet.

Step 4

Get the child used to sitting on the potty. You can encourage him to sit on the potty even at times when he does not want to urinate so that he will get used to it. But do not force him to sit on it because children at this age are always ready to be stubborn and go against the instructions that forced on them. So you have to avoid pressurizing or forcing him.

Step 5

Explain to the child after he has got used to sitting on the potty willingly and after he is able to express his need to urinate that when he sits on the potty he has to lift up his clothes. You have to watch for the signs or gestures that indicate that he wants to urinate. When you notice the signs, take him and sit him on the potty. If your child defecates in his diaper before going to the potty, take him again and make him sit on the potty, then take off

his diaper and put the faeces inside the potty, so as to help him make the connection between sitting and defecating.

Step 6

Moving from the potty to the toilet. After your child has used the potty for a while and understands how it feels when he wants to urinate, you can help him move from using the potty to using the toilet. There is no reason not to train him to use both the potty and the toilet together for a short time, if the child refuses to sit on the toilet, until he learns that the toilet is the proper place to relieve himself.

Step 7

Start night training when your child is able to stay dry and clean all day but he is not yet able to stay dry all night, because his body is not yet mature enough to be aware of the need to urinate whilst he is asleep. You can help him to remain dry (at night) by not giving him a lot of liquids before he goes to sleep at night. You can also keep the potty near the child's bed and ask him to call you if he wakes up at night so that you can bring the potty to him.

Note

You should not expect to get rapid results, because toilet training may need a lot of patience. Do not rebuke or punish your child for any mistakes in toilet training or if he does not want to start training. On the other hand, you have to encourage your child to cooperate and reward him when he responds.

Child development from 13 to 15 months

Physical development

1. Most children are able to walk without help in the thirteenth month, but they are not yet steady on their feet. They still use the furniture and other things in order to walk on their own. What matters now is that the child is able to move on his own and no longer needs to be carried.
2. He climbs the stairs on his hands and knees.
3. The child is able to climb into the crib.
4. The child's rate of growth at this stage is slower compared to previous stages. He also eats less food than in previous stages. During the period between birth and his first birthday, the child's size increases threefold and his height increases by approximately 25 cm, but between his first and second birthdays the rate of growth begins to slow down.
5. The child is able to turn pages and look at picture books.
6. The child is able to build a small tower with blocks.
7. He tries to hold on to the doorknob and open the door.

Linguistic development

- The child's vocabulary increases by the end of the fifteenth month to approximately 6 words.
- He understands simple instructions such as "Take", "Come" and "Go".
- He recognizes the names of parts of his body.
- He tries to imitate the words of others.

Social-emotional development

- Your child is now able to use his new-found skill in walking to go wherever his insatiable curiosity takes him.
- Just as your child has advanced in using his feet to walk, he will also become more skilled in using his hands.
- Most children at the age of thirteen months are able to pick up a block and put it in the box. Some children are also able to scribble.
- Your child may be able to hold a spoon.
- Your child's play will usually involve trying things out to see what will happen. For example: what will happen if I throw my plastic cup? What will happen if I dip my finger in my food? He likes to see what will happen after he does something, and because his memory is not yet fully developed he does not get bored of doing things repeatedly.
- The child has more control of his bladder. At this stage some children begin to tell their parents when they want to urinate.
- He loves to look at picture books and see what is in them.
- He notices the actions of the adults around him and tries to imitate them.
- He persists in trying to fulfill his desires, especially things that you tell him he should not do. Hence you have to pay constant attention to safety measures in the child's environment both in the home and outside.
- At this stage the child is trying to improve his ability to use a spoon, which is essential for him to eat on his own. But he also wants to find out how the egg feels, and what will happen if he throws the grapes on the floor, and so on. These things may soil your floors and furnishings, so you should place a washable mat underneath his high chair. Give him various kinds of healthy food and let him choose what he wants to eat.

- At the age of fifteen months, the child can recognize himself in the mirror and has started to see himself as a separate person and not an extension of you. He may try to kiss himself in the mirror.
- The child can pronounce the word “No” and says it often when you ask him to do something or not to do something

Child development from 16 to 18 months

Physical development

1. The child is more able to walk at this age and becomes steadier on his feet. His trunk also becomes stronger. He is able to stand, turn around, bend down and stop walking without losing balance.
2. He is also able to move quickly and to run and jump with both feet.
3. The child is able to squat easily from a standing position.
4. He is proficient in using his hands to pull a piece of food and hold it in his hand, or open his hand and let it fall to the floor.
5. At this stage the child shows a preference for one of his two hands. You may discover at this stage that the child is left-handed.
6. He uses his hands to gesture when he is speaking.
7. He is able to hold a pen and scribble with it.
8. He enjoys emptying drawers and playing with the items he finds in them.

Linguistic development

- Now he knows approximately 10 words
- He understands many more words than those that he can say.
- He is able to form two-word sentences.
- The child starts to use some concepts that he expresses by means of gestures, such as “above” and “below”.

Social-emotional development

- Sometimes your toddler gets overwhelmed by emotions and he may go through a fit of anger (tantrum) in which it is impossible

for him to prevent his tears flowing or limit his anger. Remember that he has only one way to express his frustration, unlike you, and he cannot divert his emotions into other channels such as exercising and the like. So be patient during his tantrums.

- Your child starts to distinguish between and recognize his toys and similar things, and he sees differences between them. As he is playing you may notice that he sorts his toys by color or shape.
- Children at this age are difficult to please and are picky eaters. Your child may prefer certain types of food and often refuses to eat what is offered to him.
- At this stage the child is very curious and wants to know everything.
- He enjoys scribbling and drawing lines.
- He may have some minor behavioral problems at this age, such as jealousy and stubbornness.
- He may be moody and unpredictable.
- The child becomes less afraid of strangers.
- He shows that he loves his toys.
- The toddler is able to anticipate the place where certain items are put away even if he did not see them being put away. He has more understanding of cause and effect.
- He also shows flexibility in problem-solving; for example he may use a stick to get a toy that is out of arm's reach and he may try to look for the switch on a battery operated toy and switch it on. Children of this age love to play with dolls and start to offer food to them or comb their hair, and may speak to them.
- He loves to run behind a ball and loves running in general, especially if someone plays with him or runs after him.

Child development from 19 to 24 months

Physical development

1. The child is able to play football (soccer); he can kick the ball with one of his feet and run after it.
2. He likes to run, play football, and hide behind the furniture.
3. He has more skills in balancing, agility and going up and down the stairs.
4. He gains height and weight steadily.
5. He can respond to music using his whole body.
6. The movements of his hands and fingers are more coordinated, and he has more control over his eye movements.
7. He is able to play many games that need motor skills, visual skills and mental skills.

Linguistic development

- At this stage, the child has a larger vocabulary, starting with twenty or thirty words up to fifty words.
- He talks to his father and mother and is able to form sentences with his vocabulary.
- The phrase that the child says most often at this stage is “What is that?” This is an expression of his intense curiosity, which is something normal at this stage.
- He can answer simple questions such as, “Where is your brother?”, “What did you eat?” “Where is the toy?”

Social-emotional development

- Your toddler has become more aware of differences between the sexes.

- Your daughter starts to imitate the behavior of women, whereas your son does what men do. But the child does not always imitate the same sex; this is normal so do not be surprised if your son tries to imitate women or your daughter tries to imitate men.
- Your toddler will begin to be aware when things do not make sense to adults. He will laugh at things that are clearly wrong, such as calling a giraffe a donkey or calling his sister his brother. He also understands when things are not as they should be.
- Toddlers are curious by nature – and that includes their genitals. Just as they used to play with their fingers and toes when they were smaller, now they will start to play with their genitals. When your child does that in front of people, do not overreact; all you have to do is explain to him that he must not play with these parts.
- The child still wants all attention to be focused on him and him alone.
- He may develop some feelings and behaviors such as using violence, biting, stubbornness, jealousy, anger and fear of certain things.
- He will show signs of love towards his parents and the people whom he loves, and he will always call them by their names.
- Your 21-month-old child may be attracted to the idea of tidying and organizing, helping with housework, using shelves for toys, and so on. He may be able to dress himself, wash and dry his hands, and brush his teeth with a little help.
- Your child can take care of some of his affairs himself; this indicates that the child is growing up and feeling safe and secure. Respect his inclinations, interests and preferences and try to compromise on some minor mistakes that he may make. Do not criticize all his behavior; rather offer clearer advice and explain to him that some things – such as behavior that could expose him to

danger and is not safe – are not subject to discussion or negotiation.

- You may notice that your child prefers to use one hand over the other. This is a genetic matter. Between 5 and 10% of children use the left hand, and approximately 20% of children are very skilled at using both hands and do not prefer to use one or the other.

- The right time to transfer your child to a big bed is before he is able to climb out of the crib on his own, which he may be able to do before he reaches this age. Let your child be involved in preparation for moving to the big bed by giving him the opportunity to choose his bed and sheets, and to choose a new place to sleep cosily. The first few months may be difficult, and your child may leave his bed when you leave the room, and he may visit your bedroom repeatedly. So be patient and he will get used to the new situation in the end.

- The child starts to show emotions towards other people. For example, if he sees another child being hit he may express sadness, and if he sees his father arguing with his mother, he may empathize with his mother and be very disturbed by this argument.

- Your child is able to form images in his mind and his memory starts to develop more than it did previously. The child is also able to express hostility towards any person who causes him frustration.

The Prophet (S.A.W) and children



Stories that highlight the attitude of the Prophet (S.A.W) towards children

The Prophet (S.A.W) paid a great deal of attention to the upbringing of children and forming a character that is able to build the future.

The Prophet's (S.A.W) concern for children was not only after the infant enters this world; rather his concern for children started before birth.

So we find the Prophet (S.A.W) advising men to choose good wives. The Prophet (S.A.W) said: "Women may be married for four things: their wealth, their lineage, their beauty and their religious commitment. Choose the one who is religiously-committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper)." [Agreed upon]

The Messenger (S.A.W) was very keen to choose a righteous mother for future children. The mother who is religiously

committed is the one who will in turn take care of her husband and her children in the best way.

The Prophet (S.A.W) also advised parents to choose a good name for the child, so that the name would not be a cause of resentment to the people around him or make his peers criticize him or make fun of him. The Prophet (S.A.W) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, you will be called by your names and the names of your fathers, so choose good names.”

The Prophet (S.A.W) encouraged changing names with negative or abhorrent meanings. It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar (R.A) that a daughter of ‘Umar was called ‘Aasiyah (which means disobedient); the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) renamed her Jameelah (which means beautiful).

Compassion of the Prophet (S.A.W) towards children

Whilst the Messenger (S.A.W) was leading the people in prayer, al-Husayn came and climbed on his shoulders whilst he was prostrating. He remained in prostration for such a long time that the people thought that something had happened. When he finished his prayer they said: You remained in prostration for so long, O Messenger of Allah, that we thought that something had happened. He said: “This son of mine climbed on me and rode on my back, and I did not want to make him hurry until he had had enough.”

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah, whom Allah made a Mercy to the Worlds.

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (R.A) said: I have never seen anyone who was more compassionate towards children than the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W). Ibraaheem was sent to be nursed in the suburbs of Madeenah. He [the Prophet (S.A.W)] used to go, and we would go with him, and he would enter the house, and he would hold him and kiss him, then he would come back.

'Amr said: When Ibraaheem died, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) said: "Ibraaheem is my son and he has died in infancy. He has two foster-mothers who will complete his suckling in Paradise." [Narrated by Muslim]

Another example of the Prophet's mercy and compassion towards children was that he would not make the prayer long if he heard a child crying, out of compassion towards the children and towards their mothers. In al-Saheehayn it is narrated from Anas (R.A) that the Prophet (S.A.W) said: "I start to pray, intending to make it lengthy, then I hear the crying of a child, so I shorten my prayer because of what I know of the distress caused to his mother by his crying."

The Prophet (S.A.W) was merciful towards children and enjoined others to be merciful to them too. It was narrated from 'Aa'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (S.A.W) kissed al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the two sons of 'Ali (R.A), when al-Aqra' ibn Haabis al-Tameemi was with him. al-Aqra' said: I have ten (children) and I have never kissed one of them. The Messenger (S.A.W) looked at him then he said: "The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy." [Narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim]

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said: A Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) and said: You kiss children but we do not. The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "What can I do for you when Allah has removed mercy from your heart?"

When a child encounters mercy and compassion from his parents, this compassion will be instilled in his heart when he grows up, if he grows up with good characteristics and a good attitude. The opposite is also true: the child who encounters anger and bad temper from his parents will grow up unbalanced, hating the people around him. Do not ask your child to be friendly and kind to his siblings when he is learning from you

unfriendliness and harshness. The one who does not have a thing cannot give it.

So both parents have to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W) in showing compassion towards children all the time. They should set an example to their children in all things and in doing so they should follow the best example, which is that of the Prophet (S.A.W). The children's upbringing should focus on love of the Messenger (S.A.W). Al-Tabaraani narrated that the Messenger (S.A.W) said: "Raise your children with three characteristics... including love of your Prophet and love of his family..."

The Prophet's teaching: Treating children fairly

It was narrated from al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer (R.A) that his father brought him to the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) and said: I have given my son a slave of mine. The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "Have you given a similar gift to all your children?" He said: No. He said: "Then take (your gift) back..."

According to another report, the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: "Have you done this for all of your children?" He said: No. He said: "Fear Allah and treat your children fairly." So my father took back his gift.

According to another report, the Prophet (S.A.W) said: "Do not ask me to be a witness then, for I will not be a witness to unfairness."

The Prophet's joking with children

The Prophet (S.A.W) used to joke with children and make them laugh, and he would laugh with them. It was narrated that he would stick his tongue out to make al-Hasan laugh, and he would put water in his mouth and splash it onto al-Hasan's face, and the boy would laugh.

It was narrated from Anas (R.A) that he said: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said to me: “O you with the two ears”, joking with me. And he r also used to play with Zaynab bint Umm Salamah, calling her Zuwaynib (diminutive form of the name Zaynab).

All this joking makes the child feel happy and makes him love the one who jokes with him; it instils in him light-heartedness and teaches him social interaction.

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn al-Haarith (R.A) said: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) used to line up ‘Abd-Allah, ‘Ubayd-Allah and Katheer ibn al-‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with them), then he would say: “Whoever reaches me first will have such and such.” So they would race towards him and fall on his back, and he would kiss them and hug them.

This hadeeth was narrated by Ahmad with a hasan isnaad.

The Prophet’s playing with children

The Prophet (S.A.W) used to play with the children of the Sahaabah and entertain them to make them happy. He would joke with them, be friendly towards them and encourage them in their games.

It was narrated from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (R.A) that he said: I saw al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them) on the shoulders of the Prophet (S.A.W). I said: “What a good horse you are riding!” He r said: “What good riders they are!”

Al-Tabaraani narrated that Jaabir (R.A) said: I entered upon the Prophet (S.A.W) and we were invited to eat. Al-Husayn (R.A) was playing in the street with some other boys. The Prophet (S.A.W) went ahead of the people, then he reached out (to catch al-Husayn), who started running here and there, and the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) was joking with him, until he caught him. Then he put one hand under his chin and the other on his head and he hugged him and kissed him then he said: “Husayn is of me and I am of him. May Allah love the one who loves him.”

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (R.A) said: I saw the Prophet (S.A.W) when he held the hands of al-Husayn, when he was a little child, and he put al-Husayn's feet on top of his feet, and he said: "Climb up on me, little one," joking with him.

One of the Muslim scholars said that it is well known that the reason behind this play is to relieve the child of boredom, renew his energy, get him moving, make him alert and make him exercise lest he fall sick.

Respecting the child and making him feel that he is important

It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (R.A) that Sa'd ibn Maalik (R.A) was one of those who were not allowed to join the fighting on the day of Uhud because they were too young. The Prophet (S.A.W) looked at him and said: "(Are you) Sa'd ibn Maalik? He said: Yes, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you. He [Sa'd] said: I come close to him and kissed his knee and he said: "May Allah compensate you for (the loss of) your father" – who was killed as a martyr on the day of Uhud.

This hadeeth shows us the extent of the respect that the Messenger (S.A.W) showed to the child, acknowledging his intelligence and making him feel important. The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) offered condolences to Sa'd ibn Maalik on the loss of his father, even though he was a young child, so as to set an example to be followed by the Ummah of respecting children and acknowledging their intelligence in order to raise their self-confidence.

Al-Tabaraani narrated from 'Abd-Allah ibn al-Zubayr and 'Abd-Allah ibn Ja'far (may Allah be pleased with them) that they swore allegiance to the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) when they were seven years old. When the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) saw them, he smiled and held out his hand.

What respect, what love! Even though allegiance sworn by children is not binding, out of kindness, love and care for children the Prophet (S.A.W) held out his hand to them.

Teaching children to have confidence in themselves and shoulder responsibility

Muslim narrated from Sa'd al-Saa'idi that a drink was brought to the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) and he drank some. On his right there was a young boy and on his left were some older men. He said to the young boy: "Will you give me permission to give it to these men?" The boy said: No, by Allaah, I will not give up my share of you to anyone.

In this hadeeth we see that the Messenger (S.A.W) wanted to build the character of the new generation and teach them to have self-confidence and to have the courage to say what they believed was correct.

The Prophet visiting children when they were sick

It was narrated that Anas (R.A) said: There was a Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet (S.A.W). He fell sick and the Prophet (S.A.W) went to visit him. He sat at his head and said to him: "Become Muslim." (The boy) looked at his father who was there, and he said: Obey Abu'l-Qaasim. So he became Muslim and the Prophet (S.A.W) went out saying: "Praise be to Allah Who has saved him from the Fire."

The Prophet's love and concern for children

Al-Tabaraani narrated that Salmaan (R.A) said: "We were around the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) when Umm Ayman (May Allah be pleased with her) came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, al-Hassan and al-Husayn have gotten lost.' That was in the middle of the day. The Prophet (S.A.W) said: 'Go and look for my two sons.' Each man went in a different direction, and I followed the Prophet (S.A.W); he kept going until he reached the slope of the mountain, where he saw al-Hassan and al-Husayn clinging to one another, and there was a snake that had reared up with sparks of

fire coming out of its mouth. The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) hurried towards it, and it turned towards him, then it slithered away and disappeared among the rocks. He went to them and separated them, then he patted their faces and said: ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, how dear you both are to Allah.’ Then he carried one of them on his right shoulder and the other on his left. I said: ‘What a good mount you two have, how lucky you are!’ The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: ‘What good riders they are, and their father is better than them!’”

How the Prophet (S.A.W) corrected children’s mistakes

Al-Bukhaari and Muslim narrated in their Saheehs that ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah (R.A) said: I was under the care of the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W), and my hand used to wander all over the plate. He said to me: “O young boy, say the name of Allaah and eat with your right hand, and eat from what is nearest to you.”

The Prophet’s attitude towards orphans

Al-Bayhaqi narrated that ‘Umar (R.A) said: The Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) said: “The best house of the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well, and the worst house of the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly. I and the one who sponsors an orphan will be like these two in Paradise” and he gestured with two fingers.

Teaching children the etiquette of asking permission to enter a room

It was narrated that Anas (R.A) said: I was a servant to the Prophet (S.A.W) and I used to enter without asking permission. One day I came and he said: “Stay where you are. Some new instruction has come: do not enter (a room) without permission.”

So the Messenger (S.A.W) taught Anas that he was not to enter upon anyone without asking permission.

The Messenger (S.A.W) teaches youngsters to lower their gaze

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbaas (R.A) said: al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbaas was riding behind the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) when a woman of Khath’am came to him to ask him a question. Al-Fadl started looking at her, and the Messenger of Allaah (S.A.W) started turning the face of al-Fadl to the other side.

The Prophet’s concern to teach children about their religion

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbaas (R.A) said: One day I was behind the Prophet (S.A.W) [riding on the same mount] and he said to me: O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]: Be mindful of Allah, and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah; if you seek help, seek help of Allah. Note that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with something, it would benefit you only with something that had already decreed for you, and that if they were to gather together to harm you with something, they would harm you only with something that Allah had already decreed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.”

Children and television

The television is regarded by some children as a third parent after the mother and father. It may feel comfortable for parents to be relieved of troubles caused by their children by encouraging them to watch TV for a long time. Many of the channels that offer children's programs have managed to convince parents to leave their children in front of the television and they have managed to convince them that these TV shows will take care of and educate the children.

But in fact the danger posed to children by these TV shows is greater than the benefits they offer. This has been confirmed by many studies and a great deal of academic research that has been done on this topic.

Nevertheless, I do not agree with banning children from watching television altogether. Rather they should watch it within certain guidelines:

- The total time spent watching TV should be no longer than one or two hours per day at most.
- The programs they watch should be based on sound educational principles; the parents should choose these programs carefully.
- It is preferable for the mother to discuss with her child what he is watching on television so that she can help him to understand what he is watching.

Negative effects of watching television

1. Watching television for long periods deprives children of natural activities that are necessary for the brain to develop properly and for the child to nurture his talents. Among these activities that television deprives the child of is interacting with his parents because the child is sitting in front of the television most of the time. It also deprives the child of useful games that develop his mental abilities and it decreases physical activities.

Similarly, the lack of interaction with his peers affects the child's social development.

2. Television is regarded as being one of the causes of children becoming overweight because of sitting in front of the TV for a long time and eating unhealthy processed and ready-made foods whilst watching TV.

3. It distracts the child from academic study and social relations.

4. A study carried out by Dr. Muna Faraj, Professor in the Faculty of Education at Cairo University, confirms that every hour that a small child watches television leads to a 10 % decrease in his alertness and ability to focus. It also leads to him not liking to read in general and not being attracted to books; it makes him a lazy thinker who is easily bored.

5. Dr. Mustafa 'Abd al-Samee', Dean of the Institute of Educational Studies at Cairo University adds that watching television has a negative effect on the child's mental and psychological well-being; it leads to a decrease in innovative thinking, weakens social communications and creates apathy.

6. Watching violent scenes and killings creates fear and panic and contributes to nightmares in children, especially those between the ages of two and seven years. The child may also try to copy those scenes and act violently towards his peers, thinking that this will make him happy and make him a hero.

7. There is the possibility that the child may watch indecent scenes and pornographic material, of which there is a great deal on television. Many families gather with their children around the television and sit in front of it for hours, watching movies and programs made by people who did not take into account the fact that almost all families have children.

8. Watching a lot of adverts, especially adverts for food products, has a negative impact on the child for whom everything he sees on TV will become the highest example. Often the foods advertised are harmful to the child, such as chips or foods that

contain a lot of fats, sugar and high calories, and will make the child overweight or obese, because of what they put into these foods.

Advice to help turn the television from being a destructive force to being something beneficial to children

1. If the child is less than two years old, then he should not watch television at all.
2. Avoid using the television as a babysitter; rather parents have to watch programs with the children and discuss them with them so as to instil the beneficial aspects of the programs and help avert their harmful impact from the child, because he is not able to differentiate between what is real and what is imaginary in those programs.
3. Set a limit on the number of hours that the child is allowed to watch television. This should be no more than one or two hours per day. The limit can be set on the basis of the time of the shows that the parents agree on.
4. Set the example for your child of not watching a great deal of television.
5. Offer alternatives to TV, such as playing some sports or doing some hobbies or engaging in some physical activities and other constructive activities that will benefit your child.
6. Avoid eating meals whilst watching television.
7. Find out about the content of the program before allowing your child to watch it.
8. Avoid watching cartoons that contain violent scenes and bad treatment between the characters, such as Tom and Jerry, which is usually based on an attitude of stubbornness and violence between the characters. This show has unfortunately become very famous.

9. Do not let your child watch television before he finishes his homework and household chores.

10. Do not leave the remote control in your child's hand.

Unacceptable behaviour in the family

Smoking



There is no secret about the great danger posed to adults by smoking. If this danger is posed to adults by smoking then what do you think are the dangers posed to children by smoking?

Smokers who sit with their children in the same room force them to inhale the smoke and expose them to the risk of alarming diseases through no fault of their own. So it is as if this child wants to say: "This is what my father brought upon me."

This is known as passive smoking and it is more dangerous for non-smokers and children than for the adult smokers themselves.

Studies have shown that children who are born to mothers who smoke have smaller birth weight than other children, because the harmful substances in cigarettes pass to the foetus via the circulatory system. The mother who smokes may have a miscarriage and there is also a connection between widespread asthma among children and parental smoking. Statistics drawn up by the World Health Organization indicate that six hundred thousand children in the world die annually as a result of exposure to passive smoking that causes damage to the lungs, respiratory system and heart, and causes cancer. The danger is increased if the mother smokes, because the child spends most of

his time with his mother. The harmful chemical substances in cigarette smoke, especially nicotine which is toxic, affect the breast milk and this leads to weakened immunity in the child, making him vulnerable to lung disease, slow growth and heart problems.

Over and above the dangers of diseases that may affect the infant, there is another danger which is the lack of a good example. Every father and mother who smokes should ask himself or herself this question: am I a good example for my child?

The answer is definitely no because there is no mother who wants her child to smoke. When you smoke in front of your child that is regarded as a kind of training, and when he is able to smoke he will not hesitate.

Hence both parents have to stop smoking and the new child whom they love dearly gives them a motive to put an end to the habit of smoking.

Arguments between the parents in front of the children

There is a difference between discussions in which the father and mother express their different points of view calmly in order to solve problems, and arguments which stem from conflicts between the father and mother which happen in front of the children and which may escalate to the level of using bad words and trading insults, which causes a deep wound in the psyche of the children.

Small children need stability; the child needs to feel safe and secure and to develop confidence in himself and in the people around him, which will never happen in a house that is filled with conflict between the father and mother.

Studies have shown that children who grow up in a house filled with arguments and quarrelling between the father and mother

tend to argue with their classmates and argumentativeness becomes a pattern in their lives.

These arguments also mean that the child has no example to follow, because he loses trust and respect for his arguing parents. This leads to the child failing in life because he has no example to follow. Continuation of these arguments may lead the child to hate one or both of his parents and feel put off by the entire family.

Now the parents have to ask themselves: could this atmosphere produce children who are successful and psychologically stable? On this topic Dr. Fifaan Ahmad Fu'ad, Professor of Psychiatry at Helwan University, says: "A tense relationship between the spouses has a negative and destructive effect on the character of the child. It makes him develop fear of society and a sense of insecurity. It weakens his character in school and affects his ability to learn and focus. The child who grows up in a family where marital disputes are intense stays in his room or in some corner of the house, fearfully watching a soap opera in which the stars are his mother and father, who are his primary examples in life. The child develops fear and feels insecure as a result of the rise of adrenaline in his body. The activity of the vagus nerve in the stomach limits the amount of blood reaching the brain. All of these are symptoms that lead a lack of alertness and focus, which in turn leads to falling grades in children.

The solution to all of that is as follows:

- Not having arguments with one's spouse in front of the children.
- If one of the spouses feels that a discussion is developing into an argument, he or she can retreat by leaving quietly and going to the balcony, for example, to get some fresh air, or sitting down in a comfy chair in a dimly lit room until he or she calms down and things go back to normal.
- Trying to reach a balanced solution to marital disputes by means of communication and patience. The parents

should set an example to their children and teach them how to communicate their ideas to others in a quiet and logical manner, so long as that does not transgress against the rights of others.

- Choosing the right time and circumstances to discuss problems and avoiding discussing the problem when the family is tired and exhausted, or getting ready to eat a meal or go to bed, so that the discussion will not leave a bad impression on the children.
- Parents should understand an important fact, which is that marital arguments may, in time, cause the children to develop psychological problems and physical disorders, the most significant of which are nightmares and bedwetting.
- Reducing daily pressure that family members may suffer by going out on trips or taking the children with them to visit someone they love such as a grandparent.

Finally, both parents should remember that they are the examples the children will follow and they will have the deepest impact on shaping the children's attitudes and behaviour.

Hitting children

Children usually expect protection, security and love. If the parents resort to hitting and violence as the only way of dealing with the children, this will cause frustration and make the child confused, because he is encountering violence and smacking from those from whom he expects protection and security.

Hitting children creates a cowardly individual who is afraid of any person who waves his hand in his face and is scared to do anything, even if it is useful, for fear of exposing himself to physical harm. In addition to that, the child's character will be introverted and unable to deal with pain.

The child who is exposed to hitting and violence by the parents may turn into a violent and stubborn child who argues with his siblings and peers, and counters violence with violence.

But there are some professors of social psychology who allow smacking children for the purpose of discipline. Dr. Mustafa 'Uways, Professor of Sociology at the National Centre for Sociological and Criminological Research says: Smacking is one of the means of disciplining children. And he adds: Before we affirm that it is permissible, the father and mother have to understand that what is meant by smacking here does not mean the type of hitting that can leave psychological or physical scars. Islam regards smacking as a means of discipline for a wife who defies her husband, but that comes only after he stops talking to her, then forsakes her in bed. The last resort is smacking, without hitting the face or leaving marks on the body. In the same manner, children may be smacked for the purpose of discipline, not to make them develop a complex or make them more stubborn and difficult. ... Unfortunately they do not allow us to smack children in schools, and it has gone so far that children have started to hit teachers and parents. There have been many such reports in newspapers. We do not deny that these reports refer to isolated incidents; however, such things do happen. But in order to deal with this problem we have no choice but to go back to the teachings of the Islamic religion, which allows smacking on the basis of wisdom and rationality; the punishment meted out by the parent has to be appropriate. Alternatives to smacking have not given results; rather they have led to children increasing in defiance and criminal attitudes. I am a supporter of going back to smacking that is not painful or harmful as a means of disciplining children, whether at home or school, whilst setting out necessary guidelines so that it does not lead to harming children. I believe that if we had not been smacked by parents then our discipline would have failed and if the teacher did not smack us we would not have learned anything and none of us would have become doctors or engineers or scientists. It is not a means of venting parental frustration with the children; rather

every father should decide what is good for his children and try to implement it with them in order to benefit them at present and in the future.

But most psychologists and educationalists think that smacking as a punishment for children is wrong and they prefer rational methods of disciplining their children which avoid smacking and psychological and physical harm that causes pain to the child and may undermine his dignity.

Things that can reduce smacking of children

- Give yourself some time to relax. Many parents tend to hit their children when they cannot find any time in their lives for relaxation.
- Giving your child alternatives is better than smacking him. When your child plays with his food, it is better to say to him: "Either stop playing with your food or I will punish you."
- If your child breaks something in the house, do not hit him, because if you hit him he will feel angry and will develop the desire to take revenge on the one who hits him, and he will learn that if he breaks something else, he has to hide or accuse someone else or tell lies or try not to let anyone see him for fear of being hit. Do you want your child to respect you because he fears you or because he loves you? It is better to warn him that if he breaks something, he will have to buy another one with his pocket money. If he breaks a neighbour's window you can tell him: "You broke the window and we will fix it, but you will pay for part of it from your pocket money." Ask him to remove the broken glass if he did it deliberately. The issue here is not so much the mistake; rather it is the issue of taking responsibility for the mistake and setting things straight.
- Deprive the child of things he likes to do, such as not letting him use the computer or withholding pocket

money or not letting him go on trips. These means are more effective than smacking or hitting.

Insulting or swearing at children

Many parents resort to punishing their children when they misbehave by rebuking them and showering them with offensive words, thinking that this is better than hitting them. But the most recent research and scientific studies confirm that the opposite is true. Verbal rebukes are no less harmful than hitting because they have the same harmful effects as hitting on the child's psyche.

One of the consequences of insulting children is that it shakes the child's self-respect and self-confidence, because when we insult children we give them the impression that they are worthless.

Many fathers and mothers resort to punishing their children when they make mistakes by rebuking and insulting them, which results in the child acquiring a vocabulary that is inappropriate to his age. Then the mother starts to complain that the child has a sharp tongue when speaking to her or to his father or other family members. Dr. Sayyid Subhi, a professor of mental health, says that self-respect is greatly damaged when the child is exposed to punishment by one means or another, because when we punish children we give them the feeling that they are worthless.

Finally, I advise every mother to deal with her little child as if he is an adult, by showing him respect so that he can develop confidence in himself and in the people around him. When speaking to your child it is also essential to choose the words that you would like your child to say afterwards.

Play

We can define play as "an activity or a series of activities for the purpose of entertainment or fun..." ('Adnaan 'Aarif Muslih, 1999)

Play also refers to independent movement or activity to bring pleasure or enjoyment; play cannot be done without mental energy or physical movement.

Types of play

There are several types of play that can be classified as follows:

Based on the number of participants

1. Playing alone
2. Playing in a group

Based on the structure of the play

1. Play that is spontaneous and has no rules
2. Play that is governed by rules (i.e., games)

Based on the type of play

1. Boisterous play
2. Quiet play
3. Play that develops coordination of movements and muscle growth
4. Play that is mostly of a cognitive nature (using thinking and reasoning skills)

Benefits of play

Play brings major benefits to children including the following:

- It releases physical and mental tension
- It discharges suppressed feelings, aggressive tendencies, psychological tension and negative feelings in the child and transfers them from him to the toy. So sometimes we see the child punching the toy or rebuking it harshly or even destroying it.
- It gives the child the opportunity to learn and fulfil his potentials. If we watch a child who is riding a tricycle

(trike) or playing on a swing or climbing a tree, what do we see? We see that he is learning new skills that are subject to certain principles and require certain potentials in the child. When the child succeeds it gives him the opportunity to feel in control. For example, when he reaches the top of the tree it means that he has managed to control his fear and has begun to evaluate things.

- Play is proof that the child's imagination is functioning and that he has freed himself from the real world. This is why play during this period of the child's life is called "symbolic play". So you will find that a piece of wood, in the child's imagination, can turn into a car, because he does not take things at face value; rather he takes them as his imagination suggests they can be.
- Play enriches the child's life with various activities.
- The child's knowledge of the environment in which he lives increases day by day, as playing teaches the child new things about himself and the world around him.
- It gives the child the opportunity to express his needs that he cannot express sufficiently in real life.
- It gives the child the opportunity to use his senses and reason, and increases his ability to understand.
- It makes it easy for the child to integrate and gives him the opportunity to learn some aspects of social interaction.
- It gives the child the opportunity to change, which is a fundamental need in man. Life has to change so that it will not be boring.

Things to bear in mind when choosing toys

- The toy should be in accordance with the child's interests and inclinations.
- It should be appropriate to the child's age and developmental stage.

- It should help the child to learn and grow, emotionally and socially.
- It should be versatile.
- It should be free of any chemicals that could harm the child's health.
- It should be attractive, easy to use and not very expensive.
- It should be attractive in colour, light in weight, smooth to the touch and easy to clean.
- It should be safe for the child and should not be so small that the child can swallow it or have sharp corners or metal parts that could harm the child.
- It should be entertaining and enjoyable for the child in the short term and long term and be usable in many ways that will make the child happy. Toys that can be disassembled and put together in many ways, or that are versatile and can be used in different ways, are the most entertaining and enjoyable.

Developing the child's skills through play

Make-believe and expressive games

- Through this type of play children learn to control their feelings by expressing anger, sadness and anxiety. It also gives them the opportunity to think out loud about experiences that may be positive or negative.
- Games of make-believe help the child to understand other points of view through playing roles, such as the roles of a father, doctor or teacher.
- Games of make-believe are regarded as useful in developing innovative thinking and creativity.
- By playing these games, children learn social skills such as cooperation, listening skills, giving out roles and problem-solving.
- Playing make-believe helps the child to understand the characters whose role he plays. For example when he plays the role of a doctor, that helps him to overcome his fear of visiting the doctor.
- This type of play helps to develop muscle control and hand-eye coordination.

Roles that the child can play

Children can play all sorts of roles in make-believe play, such as fathers, mothers, teachers, doctors, old people and so on.

Artistic play

This kind of play gives the child the opportunity and the means to express himself. It opens the door to self-expression and creativity, and lets him use his energy in a positive way, and teaches him how to appreciate artwork.

In artistic play the child uses a number of raw materials such as modeling clay, scissors and colored pens, which help him to develop fine muscles and how to control his hands, which will prepare him for learning how to write. It also develops hand-eye coordination and lets the child discover the features of the things he plays with.

Artistic play makes the child feel good about himself and increases his self-confidence when he produces artwork and receives encouragement, love and admiration from his parents, especially when they display his artwork in a special place in the house.

Constructive play

This is a kind of quiet, individual play that gives the child the opportunity to develop a fertile imagination and trains his muscles to move, contract and expand, and so on. This play can take several forms. It is well worth investing in toys with which the child can build, such as blocks, Lego and so on. The benefits of constructive play include the following:

- Constructive play helps the child to develop his mind and thinking. This kind of play is connected to various stages of the child's physical and mental development. In the beginning, this kind of play consists of placing things next to one another. As the child develops intellectually, he will try to place them on top of one another in the form of a pyramid or wall.
- Your child will feel happy if he can build any shape with the things that he is playing with.
- Your child will learn skills that help to develop his scientific thinking such as comparing, predicting, observing, analysing, the concept of balance, and differences and similarities between shapes.
- Constructive play helps the child to learn basic mathematical concepts such as classifying, sequence, area and number.

- Constructive play develops the child's ability to plan, because this kind of play helps the child to move from random construction to planning what he wants to build.

Cognitive play

- This refers to play that requires the child to focus and think so that he can achieve what is required of him. This kind of play also measures the child's ability to figure out things. Examples of this kind of play include puzzles of varying difficulty, memory games, matching games, sorting games and language games of various types, such as describing, explaining and distinguishing by hearing.
- Cognitive play is an important part of developing the child's mental abilities as well as expanding his understanding and making him get used to thinking.
- This kind of play helps the child to develop problem-solving skills.
- It also plays a role in developing the linguistic skills of the child.
- It develops the child's ability to analyse, focus and invent.
- Cognitive games help the child to develop his skills and help him to develop hand-eye coordination.

Active play

Dr. Jihan al-Qaadi – head of the Egyptian Learning Difficulties Society – explains that at this stage playing and games have to be of the type that focuses on muscle development, coordination and overall mobility in general. Play outside of the home is effective at this stage; playing in parks exposes the child to sunlight which is beneficial for his body and in treating bowleggedness. Active play also brings joy and adventure into the child's life. Parents have to choose toys that can be pulled along such as cars and animals on wheels, or help the child to ride on small trikes or bikes. Balls that can be thrown and kicked are also good, and parents can join their children in playing some games.

In public parks, social clubs and so on there is often playground equipment and toys that encourage these kinds of activities. During the child's third year parents have to take into account sporting activities that the child can engage in; there are some activities that children can start doing from the age of three years.

In the early years, the child needs toys and other things that will develop the large muscles such as swings, jumping games, balancing games and bikes.

Active play helps the child to develop social skills, as he learns the meaning of cooperation and sharing, and he develops team spirit, selflessness and a responsible attitude. Examples of such games include hide-and-seek, jumping games and games that involve throwing and catching a ball.

The child also learns from these games the positive meaning of competition, which may be a motive to progress and succeed. This kind of positive competition happens in active games played by a group.

Examples of fun and educational games for children

Games that the child can play in the first year of life

Note

What is more important than constantly training your child to acquire these skills is giving him hugs and showing him love when he succeeds in playing any of these games.

Problem-solving game

Teach your child to acquire problem solving skills. For example, you can put him in his high chair then put a cornflake or piece of dry bread in the opening of a small-necked bottle and let him try to get it out until he figures out by himself that he has to turn the bottle upside down to take it out. When he works out the solution he will start to put it in the bottle and take it out repeatedly.

You can also buy stacking rings; this is a toy that has a number of coloured rings of decreasing sizes that the child has to put on a cylinder base.

Eating with a spoon

Eating with a spoon is an important social skill for small children that you can teach your child by means of playing. Give the child some spoons to play with and you will find that he plays with them and drops them on the floor, but he may put one in his mouth. When you feel that he is cooperating in this game, put a small piece of banana on a spoon and put it in his mouth, then carry on with the game using different kinds of food. You will find that he quickly learns to put the spoon on an empty plate and feed himself with it (i.e., going through the motions of eating with a spoon).

Suspended toys or mobiles

You can hang some toys over the baby's crib or from the ceiling over his crib. There are many ready-made toys of this nature.

You can also hang up some toys yourself... Buy some string and put some dolls or toys made of fabric on it, then pin it up where the baby can see it.

“Musical gloves”

These are gloves that have small bells on them. Put the gloves on and shake the gloves in various places until your baby notices the sound and the gloves that are making the sound. This game teaches the child to work out where sounds are coming from.

Bathtub toys

Give your baby the opportunity to play with the water when he is having a bath. You can put some toys in the bathtub such as boats and rubber ducks, or round toys like plastic lemons, oranges and apples.

Peek-a-boo

In this game the mother sits near the child and covers her face with her hands or a cushion, and she says to the child: “Where did Mama go?” Then the mother surprises the child by showing her face and saying to him, “Here I am!” You can develop this game by hiding behind a chair or a door, then popping out to surprise the child. He will soon learn from this game that if his mother goes away for some reason, she will certainly come back.

Games for children over the age of one year

Walking games

You can play various kinds of games with your child once he learns to walk. All of these games will help to develop his flexibility and coordination.

Help him to walk in different directions, sideways and backwards and forwards. Or you can trot like a horse or walk on tiptoes, this will prompt him to imitate the way you are walking. Stretch your arms forwards whilst walking, or walk quickly then slowly, and encourage him to imitate you (“follow the leader”).

Building games

These kinds of games use blocks of different shapes, sizes and colors, but they should not be so small that the child could swallow them.

You can also play with building sets made of wood or plastic with large pieces; these will help the child learn to invent things.

Shape sorting games

There are also boards or boxes made of wood or plastic that have openings of different shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) and blocks in these shapes; the child has to put the block into the hole that is the correct shape.

Dominoes

This is a social game, played with others. The pieces in domino sets for children may have pictures, shapes and colors on them and the game can be played in the usual manner. The child whose turn it is has to look for a match between pictures, shapes or colors.

Telling colors apart

The mother puts some coloured items in front of the child and asks him to show her the red ball or the blue pen or the green cup and so on.

Games to develop the sense of hearing

The mother can train her child to distinguish some sounds using ordinary household objects such as the sound of aluminum or the sound of a drum or the sound of wood or copper, then she can ask the child to tell her what she used to make a sound, and if he does not succeed she can teach him again and then make noises again.

Acting games

The mother can ask the child to imitate her in doing some household tasks such as sweeping and cleaning, or she can stand in front of him and play the role of the doctor who is examining him (Note: The acting has to focus on positive things that make the child happy, such as the doctor caring for the child and expressing keenness for him to recover quickly by giving him medicine). Then she can ask him to imitate her playing the role of the doctor.

Sheep, camel, bear, giraffe

Take a large picture of each of these animals and put them in the four corners of the room. Then play a song and when it stops, the children have to quickly run to one of the four corners of the room. One of the adults, whilst walking backwards, has to call out the name of one of these animals and those who went to the wrong corners have to go to the corner that has the picture of the animal mentioned. Anyone who stays in the wrong corner is out of the game and the winner is the one who is left at the end.

“Simon says”

This is a game that is appropriate for all ages and does not need any special equipment or preparations. This game develops attention and focus in the child. One person stands in front of the others, and he is the leader. The leader says, “Simon says put your hand on your head,” and each child has to put his hand on his head. But if the leader says “Put your hand on your head” without saying “Simon says,” then he is out of the game. You could change it to the name of the child whose party it is, so you could say for example: “ ‘Abd al-‘Azeez says...”

Memory game

This game is fun and is also useful as it exercises the child’s memory. Put twelve pictures of different things on a board, then show the board to the children for a few seconds, then hide it. Then the children have a few minutes in which to remember the pictures that were on the board. The one who remembers most of them is the winner. You can also play this game with two teams.

How many names can you come up with?

This game requires a ball or similar object. Sit the children in a circle and give the ball to one of the children who will be the first player. Then mention a type of birds or animals (farm animals, zoo animals, pets, etc), and count to 5; during that time the player has to say the name of an animal from that group. If he makes a mistake he is out of the game. Then give the ball to another child, and so on. The winner is the one who is left at the end of the game.

Will it fly or not?

Children love birds and animals but do they know them?

Make the children stand in front of you in a semicircle, then mention the names of animals and birds. If it is a creature that

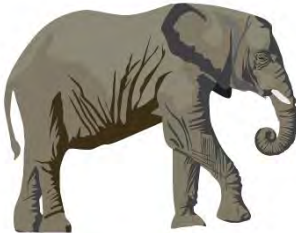
flies, they have to raise their arms and flap them like wings, but if it does not fly they have to keep their arms still. Anyone who makes a mistake is out of the game, and the winner is the one who is left at the end of the game

Matching



This is an exciting and fun game for children. Print out pictures of various things, making two copies of each picture. Spread one copy of each picture upside down on the ground and keep the other copy with you. Show the children a picture, and let them find the matching picture, then show them the second picture and let them find its match, and so on. There follow some pictures that you could photocopy and use for this game.

Who or what is this?



Who or what is depicted in the drawing? Put a picture drawn or chosen by one child on a card and put it face down, then tell the children to ask you questions can be answered with yes or no, until they work out the correct answer. You can put pictures of animals or food or something else. There follow some pictures that you can use:

Active play

Spontaneous play

Running freely or playing with a ball (other than in structured games with rules). This kind of spontaneous play lets the child burn off some excess energy and simply enjoy moving.

Let your child run in the garden and give him the freedom to do so, or encourage him the play with a ball and join him in a simple, unstructured game of catch (throwing the ball to one another).

Racing

Line the children up, then stand some distance away and tell them that whoever reaches you first will get a prize (or simply be the winner!). This game makes the children run as fast as they can, which is beneficial to their physical development and makes their bodies healthy and active.

Riding bikes

Bikes for children at this stage (2 to 4 years) should have training wheels to protect the child from falling off. At this stage the child should only ride his bike under adult supervision. Cycling helmets are mandatory in some countries or regions; they are highly recommended to avoid head injuries in children.

Pushing and pulling toys

Children enjoy these toys a great deal, especially when they first learn to stand and start to walk. These toys include tractors or horses that have wheels and can be pushed along. It is preferable for these toys to be of the kind that makes noises because that makes them more interesting for the child

Drawing and coloring



Almost all children love to draw or scribble with colors, which lets them express themselves and their feelings. Praise your child every time he finishes a drawing or coloring or even a scribble, and encourage him to keep drawing and developing his skills. Help him to come up with ideas for drawing (and draw some pictures for him) and teach him about colors. Children also love to hang their drawings in a prominent place in the house so that their parents can comment on them in ways that make the child happy and encourage him. Avoid comparing his drawings with those of other children so that you will not discourage him.

Modeling clay or play dough

This kind of play helps the child to be creative by using modeling clay or play dough. You can make play dough at home, which is better because it will be free of chemical substances that are to be found in ready-made modeling clay.

Making things out of modeling clay or play dough is one of the favorite activities of children. In order to avoid any problems, make sure the child understands that the clay or dough is not to

be eaten. Adult supervision is advisable. After he is finished, tell him to wash his hands thoroughly. You may prefer to put down a plastic mat or make the child play with the clay or dough in an uncarpeted area of the house, as pieces that are dropped and get trodden into carpet are difficult to remove.

Play Dough Recipe

1 cup white flour

1/2 cup salt

2 tablespoon cream of tartar (find it in the spice section)

1 tablespoon oil

1 cup water

food coloring

Mix first 4 ingredients in a pan. Add water and mix well. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, for 3 – 5 minutes. Dough will become difficult to stir and form a “clump”. Remove from stove and knead for 5 minutes—add food coloring during kneading process. Play dough will keep for a long time stored in a covered plastic container or plastic sandwich bag.

No Cook Play Dough Recipe

1 cup of flour

1 cup of boiling water

2 tablespoons of cream of tartar

a half cup of salt

1 tablespoon of oil

Directions:

Simply mix all the ingredients together! Be careful as it can be quite hot.

Note

Keep the play dough in a plastic box or wrap it with plastic so that it does not dry out.

Adding color and scent

You can make play dough of different colours using food colouring. Some mothers suggest adding vanilla or cinnamon to the mix to get a pleasant scent.

Suggested things to make to make with modelling clay or play dough

Show these shapes to your child and help him to copy them using modelling clay or play dough.

Nursery rhymes and songs

Nursery rhymes are among the things that children love, and they are also means of both education and entertainment for children, especially rhymes and songs that speak of the child's daily life or about his family or things that he sees around him such as animals and plants. Nursery rhymes also reinforce good behavior in the child by means of words that encourage it, such as honesty, praying regularly, reading Qur'an and other good behavior.

Children love songs that are narrated by animals or birds that they know. Attention should be paid to making the rhymes or songs in simple language with short sentences so that the child can easily understand them. They should also be happy and funny. Nursery rhymes give the child the opportunity to move because children do not like to stand still and they are very happy with rhymes that let them move their arms or feet or make them clap or run with joy.

You can use traditional rhymes and songs from your culture, but it is advisable to make sure the content is Islamically acceptable. Some people take a traditional rhyme or song and make up new words for it that are more in tune with Islamic sensibilities.

Examples of some nursery rhymes or songs that mothers can teach to their children

Days of the Week

(Tune: "Clementine")

There are seven days, there are seven days,
there are seven days in a week.(repeat)Sunday, Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Saturday. There are seven
days, there are seven days,
there are seven days in a week!

(From www.bussongs.com)

My toothbrush

I have a little toothbrush I hold it very tight I brush my teeth each morning, And then again at night

(From www.bussongs.com)

Red Sky at Night

Red sky at night, Sailor's delight; Red sky at morning, Sailor's warning.

Traditional rhyme speaking of weather patterns; red sky at sunset heralds good weather the following day, but a red sky at sunrise is a signal that unpleasant weather is on the way. The word "sailor" may be replaced by "shepherd". (From www.rhymes.org.uk)

Thirty Days hath September

30 days hath September, April, June and November, All the rest have 31, Excepting February alone. Which only has but 28 days clear And 29 in each leap year

Another traditional rhyme that helps one remember which months have how many days. (From rhymes.org.uk)

Colorful Farm Animals

Red rooster, red rooster strutting around, Pecking at seeds lying on the ground.

Black cow, black cow walking around, Eating green grass on the ground.

Yellow duck, yellow duck waddling around, Eating juicy worms, crawling on the ground.

(From www.preschoolexpress.com)

There's a color we all know

(Tune: "Old MacDonald Had a Farm")

There's a color we all know, G-R-E-E-N. It's the color that means
"Go!" G-R-E-E-N. Oh, grass is green and lettuce is green, Leaves
and spinach and peas are green, There's a color we all know,
G-R-E-E-N

Elizabeth Scofield

(From www.preschoolexpress.com)

Hippity-Hop

Hippity-hop, hippity-hay Five little bunnies went out to play.

Hippity-hop, hippity-hay One little bunny hopped away.

Hippity-hop, hippity-hay Four little bunnies went out to play.

(Continue rhyme until all bunnies hop away.)

This is great to act out with five children at a time or use on a
flannel board.

(From www.preschoolexpress.com)

Some rhymes specifically for Muslim children:

Ramadan is coming soon

(Tune: This may be sung to the tune of “Here we go round the mulberry bush” or “London Bridge is falling down”)

Ramadan is coming soon, Coming soon, coming soon, Ramadan is coming soon, Time to fast and pray. When we see the thin new moon, Thin new moon, thin new moon, When we see the thin new moon, We'll celebrate and play.

(From www.bussongs.com)

If You Want to Please Allah

(Tune: “If you're happy and you know it”)If you want to please Allah, worship Him, (repeat) : Worship Him!If you want to please Allah, worship Him, (repeat) : Worship Him!If you want to please Allah and you really want to show it,If you want to please Allah, worship Him, (repeat) : Worship Him!...Make SalatGive ZakatStart to fastGo to Hajj...

(From aussiemuslims.com forums)

It's Raining, It's Pouring

It's rainingIt's pouringAllah's Blessings are fallingQur'aan must be read before we go to bedSo Allah will be pleased with us until the morning

(From aussiemuslims.com forums)

I'm A Little Muslim

(Tune: “I'm a Little Teapot”)

I'm a little Muslim, brave and strong.Here is my heart and here is my song,I will fight for Allah all life long.Never, ever will I do wrong!

(From aussiemuslims.com forums)

Do Good Deeds

(Tune of "Row, row, row your boat") Do, do, do good deeds, Many
as you can. Verily, verily, verily, Do what God commands. Go, go,
go and see, What good you can do. Surely, surely, surely, Allah
rewards you.

A Du'aa' for Little Ones

Oh, make me humble, never ever grumble. Please make me
grateful for what I've earned. Make me remember, to You I
surrender. And to you we shall all be returned.

Short stories for children

Children love to have stories, or “fairy tales”, as they may be called, told to them. It is a good idea for the mother to use picture books so that the child can see the things that his mother is telling him about and it will be more real for him.

The mother can teach her child about a certain custom or behavior through these stories, or she can encourage him to adhere to some religious practices such as prayer and obedience to parents.

But it is essential to avoid scary stories that speak of animals and other things the child is afraid of, such as stories about ghosts or man-eating lions or a character who snatches little children, so that the child will not become scared or anxious.

There follows an example of a story about strong teeth (a gift from the author to your child):

One day Ahmad was walking home from school and on the way he bought some sweets and ate them, then he went home and went straight to his room without brushing his teeth. He fell asleep and had a strange dream. He saw an evil worm coming near some weak teeth and attacking them, saying, “What a lovely piece of candy! Attaaaack!” But the teeth were smart; they rushed to bring a toothbrush and toothpaste and they washed away the piece of candy and destroyed the evil worm. The teeth stood in a row and sang their victory song: “We won, we won, we killed the evil worm!” Ahmad woke up suddenly from his sleep and went straight to the bathroom to brush his teeth. The next morning when he got up, he took a shower and brushed his teeth, then he stood in front of the mirror combing his hair and saying, “Ma sha Allah, how beautiful my teeth are. I will never forget to brush my teeth properly from today.”

Kindergarten and its importance in education



Froebel says:

The kindergarten is the place in which little human sprouts grow, hence its name (which means “children’s garden” in German). It is as if the kindergarten teacher is a gardener and the children are the flowers; the children grow and develop automatically like plants. The role of the kindergarten teacher is to help them grow by allowing their inner feelings to flourish and express themselves. Hence the kindergarten teacher has to find out about the interests and inclinations of the child through various activities and play.

The role of the nursery school and kindergarten is that of a social and educational institution that strives to prepare the child to join the first grade of elementary school. This is so that the child will not feel the shock of the sudden move from home to school. It also gives him complete freedom to do various activities and discover his abilities, inclinations and potentials. Thus the kindergarten tries to help the child to acquire new skills and experiences. At this stage the child needs continuous encouragement so as to develop in him the love of collective

work and to instil a spirit of cooperation, positive participation, self-reliance and self-confidence, as well as enabling him to acquire linguistic and social skills and form a sound inclination towards the educational process.

In the modern curriculum, the child is the focal point of all activities and it always lets him do self-directed activities, making him experience, try and explore. It encourages free play and rejects principles of coercion and force, focusing instead on principles of flexibility, innovation, re-energising and inclusiveness. All of this requires the presence of a teacher who is well qualified and loves her job and is able to interact with children in a loving, bighearted and patient manner.

Maria Montessori thinks:

1. The child is a human being who is an explorer from the time he is born. He always wants to find out about the relationship between himself and others and the relationship of things with one another. Kindergartens should provide everything that is needed to fulfil the child's exploratory desires. Montessori also thinks that the child goes through a number of changes in the first years of life, but they differ in pace from one child to another, according to individual differences. Each of these changes has its own distinct requirements that differ from others. These changes can be categorized according to the stages of the child's growth.

From birth to the age of three years the child:

- Acquires experience through his physical faculties
- Takes in information

From the age of one and a half years to three years:

- This is the age of linguistic development

From the age of two to four years the child:

- Starts to improve his control of physical movements

- Begins to understand order and sequence in time and space

From the age of two and a half years to six years the child:

- Begins to improve his sensory perception

From the age of three and a half years to four and a half years:

- This is the age of preparing to learn how to write

From the age of four years to four and a half years:

- Refining the sense of touch

From the age of four and a half years to five and a half years:

- This is the age of preparing to learn how to read

2. Preparing an environment in the kindergarten that contains an abundance of educational tools with which the children can work until they are able to express their needs and wishes, and which will give them sound help in their intellectual, psychological and physical development.

Kindergarten is a planned educational stage that is no less important than any other educational stages. It is a distinct educational stage with its own character, educational philosophy and specific educational, psychological and behavioral aims. The aims of kindergarten focus on respecting the individual uniqueness of each child and stimulating independent, innovative thinking and encouraging the children to change without fear; it takes care of the children physically and helps them to get used to sound, healthy habits; it helps them to live, work and play with others; it teaches them to appreciate music, beauty and nature; and it trains them to sacrifice some of their own desires for the good of all.

How to choose a suitable daycare/nursery school for your child

Teachers' qualifications

One of the most important matters with regard to nursery schools and daycares is the educational level of the teacher who is in charge of educating the children in the nursery school. She is regarded as an alternative mother to the child and she deals with the children who have left their mothers and homes and now find themselves in a strange environment for the first time. The success and educational progress of the child depends entirely on the success and qualifications of the teacher.

Unfortunately there are many nursery schools and kindergartens that do not pay attention to the professional and educational level of the teachers who work there, even though this is one of the most important matters. The teacher is an example whom the child will follow; he will emulate her character, behaviour and conduct. Hence paying attention to the character, values, emotions and habits of the teacher is no less important than paying attention to her role, track record, work and technical skills.

Location

The nursery should be located close to the child's home so that it is possible to reach it by walking. It is also preferable for it to be located far away from markets, sources of noise, factories, sources of pollution and main roads, so that the child will not be exposed to the danger of fast cars when crossing the street. It should be among houses so that the child will feel comfortable. It is preferable for the nursery school to be located among gardens or green space so that the child may develop an appreciation of natural beauty.

Size

The size of the nursery should be appropriate to the number and ages of the children and the indoor and outdoor activities they will engage in, in addition to other facilities that are required in the building such as administrative offices, meeting rooms, kitchens, washrooms and medical examination rooms. There should be enough room for the children to play freely.

Building

The building should take into account health concerns with regard to sun exposure and wind direction (in hot climates, it should face north), because light and air are fundamental and basic matters.

Play rooms and gardens

The nursery should have a grassy area and an area of clean sand, with large play equipment such as swings and slides.

Health and psychological services

The nursery should include health services such as a first aid room, natural remedies, and an office for a social worker.

Health and safety concerns

The mother has to pay attention to eating utensils – are they appropriate and safe? They should not be made of glass that can break or plastic that can interact with the food. The best utensils are made of stainless steel. She also has to make sure that the play equipment is safe and that crayons, paint, etc. are not toxic.

Is it the role of the nursery school or kindergarten to teach the child how to read and write?

Despite the fact that the child at this stage is mentally ready to learn new words and has a huge capacity to store new vocabulary, at the same time his muscle control is not yet fully developed, especially the fine muscles that enable him to hold and control a pen properly. Moreover his nervous system and vision are not yet able to focus and read. If we teach the child how to read and write at this age, it is akin to forcing a five-month-old baby to stand and walk.

We should also keep it clear in our minds that the aim of the nursery school or kindergarten stage is not to teach reading and writing or to give the child a curriculum of subjects such as language, religion and mathematics. These aims will be achieved at later academic stages. What we have to pay attention to now is developing the child's ability to speak and express himself correctly and training him to pay attention, listen and pick up information, in addition to helping him love books and knowledge, develop control of his movements and muscles, and acquire awareness of the five senses and how to use them properly.

From the above we see that the child is able to feel, understand, see and comprehend what is around him and find out about his social and natural environment, which will help him to achieve social and emotional harmony whilst getting him used to respecting the wishes and inclinations of others for the sake of emotional balance between his own wishes and those of others. It is also important to teach the child religious, moral, aesthetic and patriotic values so that he can distinguish between good and evil, beautiful and ugly, in interactions with others.

All of these goals should be dealt with as one harmonious and indivisible unit. It is not possible to give precedence to one goal

over another if we want to achieve the holistic goal, which is to make the child happy and prepare him to be a positive member of society.

Preparing the child to read and write in kindergarten

The aim of preparing the child to read and write does not mean that we teach him how to read and write at this stage. As we have mentioned above, it is not the role of the nursery school or kindergarten to teach the child to read and write; rather its role is to develop the child's mental, physical, psychological, social and linguistic skills in order to prepare him to start school, where he will learn other things including reading and writing. Hence at the kindergarten stage it is essential to increase the child's vocabulary in preparation for reading as well as strengthening the muscles of his hands in preparation for writing.

Preparing the child for reading

One of the most important ways of preparing the child to learn how to read is developing his language skills and increasing his vocabulary by as many words as possible.

With regard to the curriculum that has to be set out for training the child and preparing him to read, it has to be suited to his environment, abilities and inclinations, and it should stem from the values of his society. It should include activities that motivate the child to use and understand language verbally, such as trips, conversation and listening to stories. Attention should be paid to enriching the topics discussed with the child in exciting ways by means of pictures and clear letters. Attention should be paid to ensuring that pictures are in the same sequence as the story being told. The number of words intended to be taught should be few per page, to make it easy for the child to understand them. Bright and beautiful colors should be used to attract the child's attention.

Methods that are universally agreed upon for preparing the child to read include the following activities:

Parties and trips

These are social activities that children love and they make children happy because the child feels that he is participating in daily life and he sees himself as part of a larger group. Parties and trips help to increase the child's vocabulary and give him new experiences through watching, feeling and understanding. They teach him self-reliance and strengthen his social relationships with his peers.

Dramatic play

Make-believe and role-playing are regarded as an opportunity to encourage the child to express himself, increase his discernment and develop his reasoning.

Telling stories

The benefit of telling stories to the child is that it enriches his vocabulary, develops his imagination, helps him to be creative and innovative and lets him get used to listening well.

Alphabet games

Flashcards play an important role in teaching the child letters. Write the same letter on a number of cards except one, which has a different letter on it, and let him pick out the one that is different. It has been found that this method develops the child's ability to control his eyes and look at things from close range, which will make it easy for him later on to look at books and it will help him to develop hand-eye coordination.

Puppets

Puppet plays are a means of preparing children to learn; from these plays children learn traditions, concepts and behaviour and they develop their linguistic skills.

Preparing children to write

Preparing children to write is done by means of the following:

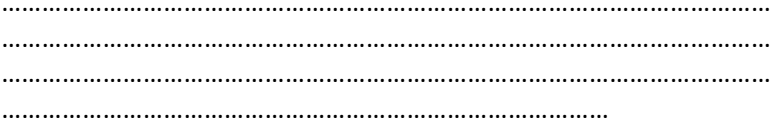
- Developing the child’s coordination
- Developing his visual skills
- Strengthening the muscles of the hand and finger tips
- Helping the child get used to holding the pen correctly

Examples of activities that develop the child’s skills and help him get ready to write

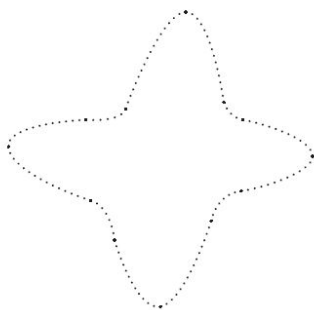
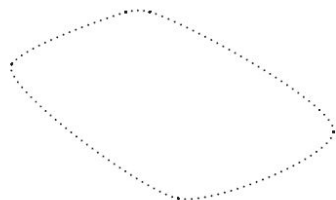
- Give the child some pens and paper so that he can start to scribble on these papers. The child needs to take time with scribbling so that he can get used to paper and pens.
- Gradually teach the child to hold the pen properly.
- Give the child some lines that he can trace with the pen, to develop his skill and hand-eye coordination, and strengthen the muscles of his hand.

Examples

Let your child connect the dots to make a straight line



Let your child trace over these lines and shapes with a pencil or crayon



Common childhood illnesses

Disclaimer: The content of this chapter is intended for information purposes only and is not a substitute for any medical advice or treatment for any specific medical condition whatsoever. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any specific disease or condition.

The information presented is not intended to take the place of your own physician's, GP's, medical practitioner, healthcare provider's advice nor is it intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any specific disease or condition. Any concerns or health issues must be referred to your doctor or pediatrician.

Common cold

The common cold is regarded as the most common illness in small children. The child's immune system is not fully developed until he reaches the age of five years. Hence a child may catch a cold several times in one year. Cold symptoms include runny nose, watery eyes, sore throat, cough, sneezing and low-grade fever.

There are more than two hundred viruses that can affect the upper respiratory tract, which leads to a cold.

The cold is a mild respiratory illness caused by one of these viruses.

Precautions to avoid spreading viruses

1. Encourage children to wash their hands all the time, because the cold virus can live on the hand for a long time; hence shaking hands is one of the ways in which the virus spreads.
2. Teach the child to get rid of used tissues straightaway.
3. Clean kitchen utensils thoroughly, especially plates, spoons and cups, and especially if one of the family members is suffering

from a cold. This will limit the spread of the virus to any other family members.

Taking care of a child with a cold

1. Do not use antibiotics, because up till now there is no effective drug that will help the child recover from a cold quickly; moreover, antibiotics are not effective in treating the virus that causes this illness.
2. Encourage the child to drink a lot of liquids.
3. Encourage the child to blow his nose every time he feels that it is blocked.
4. Use nasal saline spray to reduce congestion. Nasal saline spray is regarded as safe and does not cause any allergy in the nose, unlike drugs that may not be suitable for small children.
5. Do not give aspirin to children under the age of twelve years if they get the flu, because aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome (a potentially fatal disease) in children, and it can also cause other serious diseases that can affect the blood, liver and brain.
6. Maintain a high level of humidity in the house, because dry air makes cold symptoms worse; this is the opposite of what some mothers usually do.
7. Do not give the child cough suppressant medicine without consulting a doctor, because coughing clears the airways and prevents further infection.

When should you call the doctor?

1. If the cold lasts for longer than 3 to 4 days
2. If there is pain or infection in the ear
3. If the child's temperature rises suddenly
4. If the child's breathing is persistently abnormal
5. In the event of loss of appetite or vomiting

6. In the event of stomach pain

7. In the event of severe headache and continual crying

Finally, I advise the mother to be patient and take care of her child, because the cold virus usually lasts until the body is able to produce antibodies to get rid of the virus.

Influenza (flu)



Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness that has many symptoms that resemble those of the common cold, but it is caused by a different virus and is a more serious illness. Symptoms include: headache, chills and cough, followed rapidly by fever, loss of appetite, muscle aches and fatigue, running nose, sneezing, watery eyes and throat irritation. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also occur, especially in children.

The most common kind of flu is the “seasonal flu”, most cases of which occur between October and May. Occasionally there are scares about different kinds of flu, such as the “bird flu” and “swine flu” that were making headlines around the world a few years ago. These are types of influenza caused by new strains of

Signs and Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Fever	Usually present	Rare
Aches	Usual, often severe	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Tiredness	Moderate to severe	Mild
Symptom onset	Symptoms can appear within 3 to 6 hours	Symptoms appear gradually
Coughing	Dry, unproductive cough	Hacking, productive cough
Sneezing	Uncommon	Common
Stuffy nose	Uncommon	Common
Sore throat	Uncommon	Common
Chest discomfort	Often severe	Mild to moderate
Headache	Common	Uncommon

the virus which include genes from types of flu that usually affect birds or pigs.

Is it a cold or flu?

The following chart shows the main differences between the two:

Treating flu

Because the flu is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help to treat it or speed recovery. Usually plenty of rest and liquids will help the sick child; acetaminophen (also known as paracetamol) may help relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with this illness. Aspirin should not be given to children because it may cause Reyes syndrome (a potentially fatal illness).

In many countries, people are advised to have an annual vaccination (the “flu shot”) for protection against influenza. In addition to that, there are further precautions that can be taken to protect against flu and other infectious illnesses:

The World Health Organization advises taking some precautionary measures to protect yourself and your child from the flu virus and other illnesses. These precautions are as follows:

Influenza

How you can protect yourself and others

Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing

Throw the tissue in the trash immediately after use

Always wash your hands with soap and water

If you get any symptoms of flu, hasten to visit the doctor

If you get any symptoms of flu, keep a distance no less than 1 m away from others when interacting with them

If you get any symptoms of flu, do not leave your home and go to work or school or any crowded places

Do not hug, kiss or shake hands when greeting others

Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth without washing your hands

Diarrhoea and dehydration



Most children suffer from occasional bouts of diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea is a symptom in which solid stools turn to liquid or watery stools and the child defecates more than three times in one day. Diarrhoea is especially common in children between the ages of six months and two years, but it is also common in children less than six months old if they are bottle-fed instead of being breastfed.

Causes of diarrhoea

1. Ingesting some pathogens via the mouth, such as viruses, germs and parasites. That may happen via contaminated milk, water or food, or using contaminated vessels such as bottles and teats. Or these viruses may come in through garbage and an environment with poor sanitation.
2. Diarrhoea may be a side-effect of some medicines such as antibiotics like penicillin or giving the child excessive doses of vitamins.
3. Diarrhoea may also accompany some illnesses such as infections caused by viruses, bacteria and parasites.

Symptoms that may accompany diarrhoea

1. Vomiting, which is regarded as one of the main symptoms
2. Severe redness around the anus
3. High temperature
4. Abdominal pain

Dehydration

Dehydration is regarded as one of the most serious complications of diarrhoea. Hence whenever the child has diarrhoea it is essential to watch him and make sure to treat this symptom.

Symptoms of dehydration

1. Thirst – the thirstier the child feels, the more likely it is to be an indication that he has started to dehydrate.
2. Dryness in the mouth and on the lips.
3. Sunken eyes.
4. Loss of flexibility in the skin; you can test the flexibility of the skin by lightly pinching the skin on the stomach or neck between two fingers; if it is slow to go back to normal this is a sign of dehydration.
5. Loss of appetite.
6. High temperature.
7. Abnormal drowsiness or apathy.
8. Not urinating for six consecutive hours.
9. Loss of balance.
10. Rapid heartbeat.
11. Lack of tears.

Treating dehydration

Preparing 1 (one) Litre solution using Salt, Sugar and Water at Home

Mix an oral rehydration solution using the following recipe.

Ingredients:

- Six (6) level teaspoons of Sugar
- Half (1/2) level teaspoon of Salt
- One Litre of clean drinking or boiled water and then cooled - 5 cupfuls (each cup about 200 ml.)

Preparation Method:

- Stir the mixture till the salt and sugar dissolve.

Effective homemade remedy for watery diarrhoea

An efficient and effective homemade remedy to be used when watery diarrhoea strikes and is a good substitute for oral rehydration salts:

Ingredients:

- 1/2 to 1 cup precooked baby rice cereal or 1½ tablespoons of granulated sugar
- 2 cups of water
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Instructions:

Mix well the rice cereal (or sugar), water, and salt together until the mixture thickens but is not too thick to drink. Give the mixture often by spoon and offer the child as much as he or she will accept (every minute if the child will take it). Continue giving the mixture with the goal of replacing the fluid lost: one cup lost, give a cup. Even if the child is vomiting, the mixture can be offered in small amounts (2-1 tsp.) every few minutes or so.

- Banana or other non-sweetened mashed fruit can help provide potassium.
- Continue feeding children when they are sick and continue breastfeeding if the child is being breastfed.

10 Things you should know about rehydrating a child.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing solution.
2. Prepare a solution, in a clean pot, by mixing- Six (6) level teaspoons of sugar and Half (1/2) level teaspoon of Salt or - 1 packet of Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) 20.5 grams mix with- One liter of clean drinking or boiled water (after cooled)Stir the mixture till all the contents dissolve.
3. Wash your hands and the baby's hands with soap and water before feeding solution.
4. Give the sick child as much of the solution as it needs, in small amounts frequently.
5. Give child alternately other fluids - such as breast milk and juices.
6. Continue to give solids if child is four months or older.
7. If the child still needs ORS after 24 hours, make a fresh solution.
8. ORS does not stop diarrhoea. It prevents the body from drying up. The diarrhoea will stop by itself.
9. If child vomits, wait ten minutes and give it ORS again. Usually vomiting will stop.
10. If diarrhoea increases and /or vomiting persists, take child over to a health clinic.

Healthy nutrition for your child

Infants

The mother's milk contains numerous beneficial substances that help to restore the lining of the intestines and other materials that resist bacteria. Hence the best thing that you can give your baby when he has diarrhoea is mother's milk in whatever amount is possible, with the addition of some electrolyte solution to help make up for lost fluids.

With regard to bottle-fed babies, some doctors regard it as preferable to switch from formula milk to electrolyte solution for between twelve and twenty-four hours, to replace fluids lost from the body, then you can go back to giving the baby formula milk.

Older children

It is preferable to give the child on the first day he is affected by dehydration the following foods: banana, apple, rice, toast. Then you can add some other foods gradually on the second and third days, according to the child's appetite. It is essential to avoid foods that contain large amounts of sugar and fats, such as ice cream and fried foods; it is also preferable to avoid dairy products for three to seven days.

Prevention of diarrhoea

1. It is essential to wash the hands thoroughly before preparing food and to wash fruits, vegetables, herbs and grains and clean them thoroughly before cooking them. If they are to be eaten raw, they must be washed more carefully.
2. Vessels and utensils for cooking and eating must be washed thoroughly before using them.

3. Attention must be paid to cleanliness of the house; try not to let there be any insects in the house because one of the causes of diarrhoea is transmission of viruses by flies and cockroaches, and other harmful household pests.

4. It is essential to reheat cooked food properly before eating it, in order to kill any germs that may have formed in it when it was stored. It must be noted that reheating food properly means that it should reach a temperature of at least 70°C.

5. Feed your child healthy foods; try to breastfeed him when he is small and give him a balanced diet when he gets older.

6. Get your child vaccinated against contagious diseases.

The danger of kissing your small child on his mouth

Kissing the child on his mouth is very dangerous, because the kiss that the mother or father plants on the child's mouth, especially in the first three months, is enough to transmit any diseases that either or both of the parents may be suffering.

This applies before the child reaches the age of six months, as his immune system is not yet fully developed. If the infant is kissed by an adult who is affected by any disease, he may develop a fungal infection on his tongue, which may then spread to all parts of his mouth; this will cause him to drool constantly and he will not be able to eat enough.

It may also transmit germs like staphylococcus. These are bacteria that naturally occur in the mouth even if it is healthy, and may be transmitted via kissing to the child, whereupon they cause illness because of the weakness of his immune system. That results in infections of the throat and mouth, and may lead to tonsillitis. When the child grows and reaches the age of two years, there may be serious complications affecting the heart, or repeated kidney infections. One of the diseases that is spread via kissing is cerebro-spinal fever which is also spread via bacteria that occur naturally in the human mouth.

Doctors say that the proper way to kiss the child is to kiss his hand or forehead, because bacteria die quickly on the child's hand or forehead

- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhoea
- Extremely pale skin and sweating, skin redness, or blue skin color
- Confusion

Symptoms usually appear within two hours after exposure to the substance — sometimes within minutes — although it is possible for symptoms to appear up to four hours later.

What should I do if my toddler seems to be having a severe allergic reaction?

Call an ambulance immediately if your toddler is having trouble breathing or passes out. Lay him down with his feet elevated to reduce the risk of shock. Try to keep him calm by talking to him and by remaining calm yourself.

Do not give your child an antihistamine if he's having any trouble breathing or swallowing, because he may choke on it.

When the paramedics arrive, they will probably treat your toddler on the spot with an injection of epinephrine that will stop the reaction within minutes. (Epinephrine makes the heart beat more strongly, relaxes the muscles in the airway, reduces swelling, and improves tone in the blood vessels to increase blood flow to vital areas like the heart and brain.)The paramedics will take your toddler to the hospital, where he'll be examined and watched for delayed reactions. The doctors at the hospital can help you determine what caused the problem. You will probably also be advised to follow up with your child's doctor, who will likely refer you to a pediatric allergist.

Anaphylaxis is a potentially fatal condition. Even if the first episode of anaphylaxis is mild, there is no way of guaranteeing that a subsequent episode will not be severe. Avoidance of "trigger" foods is strongly recommended, and the doctor may suggest that the child carry an Epi-pen (auto-injection syringe containing Epinephrine) to be administered in the event of

anaphylaxis occurring. Caregivers and teachers have to be notified, and in most cases it is advisable to leave one Epi-pen at the daycare, nursery or school and another at home.

What can I do for my child who has a food allergy?

Firstly, you have to find out which foods are causing your child's allergic symptoms and ascertain whether your child does in fact have an allergy.

Allergies in general, as the American Medical Encyclopedia says, are a violent reaction that results from stimulation of the immune system by some factor that does not normally provoke the immune system.

You can find out your child's sensitivities from the earliest days by observing and by trial and error. Make a list of the foods that cause allergic reactions, then show this list to the specialist; the doctor can also carry out some tests on the skin and blood tests to find out what is causing this allergic reaction.



Foods that children are most commonly allergic to

Among the foods that most frequently cause allergic reactions in children are chocolate, cow's milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, peanuts and tree nuts.

But this does not mean that your child can never eat these foods at all; rather you have to watch your child every time he eats them to see whether he has an allergic reaction or not. In many cases a child may grow out of an allergy to foods such as eggs. In potentially life-threatening cases (e.g., peanut allergy), the food has to be avoided completely. This requires a great deal of vigilance on the part of parents, because the food in question may be hidden in cookies, prepared foods and the like.

What should I do if my child has an allergy to milk?

In this case you can buy kinds of milk from which the cow's-milk protein has been removed. There are also "milks" made from soy, rice, almonds and so on, which may be acceptable substitutes so long as the child is not allergic to the foods from which they are made.

Treating food allergies

The best way of treating food allergies is:

1. Identify the substance that is causing the allergy
2. Remove this substance from the child's diet – you can ask the doctor about alternatives to this substance or food
3. Breastfeeding in the first year of the child's life may protect him against food allergies
4. Gradually introduce foods to complement breast milk; it is better to delay the introduction of foods that commonly cause

allergies in children, such as eggs, fish and chocolate, until the child reaches the age of 9 to 12 months.

5. Most cases of food allergies in children grow less severe and disappear as the child grows older.

Asthma

Asthma is a common chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. Asthma may occur because of viruses, dust, pollen, some medications, dampness, changes in climate or a number of other factors. It may also occur when a person is sensitive to factors that provoke an allergic response in the airways. This susceptibility may be hereditary, and we cannot diagnose it in children until they have passed the age of one year. The rate of asthma among boys is double that among girls. Most children who are affected by this disease may recover in the early stages of adolescence.

Symptoms of asthma

1. Difficulty in breathing
2. Wheezing
3. Tight chest
4. Difficulty sleeping
5. Cough that is worse at night

Prevention and treatment

1. The doctor may prescribe medication for the patient to widen the airways.
2. If the medicine meant to widen the airways is not effective, steroids may be used until the child is able to inhale the medication or take it in tablet form. Steroids should not be used long term because of the risk of adverse effects.
3. Calming the child down when a bout of asthma occurs.

4. Reducing the amount of dust and other irritants in the child's environment by means of regular vacuuming
5. Keeping the child away from people who have colds and not kissing the child on the mouth
6. Not smoking in the house
7. Paying attention to washing the bed sheets and blankets in hot water at least once a month. Pillowcases should be washed every week.
8. Not exposing the child to car exhausts and their smoke
9. Finally, try to find out what is causing asthma in your child, especially severe bouts, by watching when it happens.

Chickenpox



Chickenpox is an illness that is caused by a virus called Varicella zoster virus.

Chickenpox is a contagious disease that is spread directly from one child to another; it usually affects children. The incubation period varies between two and three weeks, but the average is fourteen days. The patient remains contagious from the day

before the symptoms first appear until six days after symptoms appear.

Symptoms of chickenpox

1. Slight rise in temperature (38°C)
2. Redness in the eyes and increased secretions
3. Tiredness, exhaustion, headache and a light cough in some children
4. After twenty-four hours, the skin rash appears in the form of small red bumps resembling pimples or insect bites. These develop into blisters containing a clear liquid. These appear on the entire body but mostly on the face and torso. When the blisters break, they leave open sores that then crust over and turn into dry scabs.

Is this illness contagious?

Chickenpox is very contagious. A child with chickenpox is contagious from about 2 days before the rash appears until all the blisters are crusted over.

Ways in which the disease is spread

1. Through airborne particles emitted when talking, sneezing or coughing.
2. Through direct contact with the skin or by touching a blister or the liquid from a blister.
3. Through mixing of healthy children with children who have the illness.

Ways in which the disease is spread

In general, chickenpox is not serious in most children; but it may be dangerous for children who have low immunity or are receiving medication that suppresses the immune system. In pregnant women, chickenpox may be severe and if it is caught in early pregnancy, there is a small risk of harm to the foetus.

Prevention and treatment of chickenpox

1. A vaccine is available that offers protection against chickenpox.
2. Keep the sick child isolated as much as possible for a week from when the rash first appears.
3. Use creams to stop the itching, such as calamine lotion. This will prevent contamination of the spots. But be careful not to use too much, because doing so will cause the skin to become drier, which will make the itching worse.
4. Clip the child's nails to avoid possible complications resulting from scratching.
5. Aspirin must not be given to a child who has chickenpox. Acetaminophen (Paracetamol) may offer some relief.
6. It is not possible to treat chickenpox with antibiotics, because the cause of this sickness is a virus.
7. Children receiving drugs that suppress the immune system, and others who are at risk, may be given varicella zoster immune globulin after exposure to chickenpox to reduce its severity.

Poliomyelitis

Poliomyelitis, or polio, is a viral infection caused by poliovirus. It most commonly spreads in the late summer and early fall. This virus affects the central nervous system and varies in severity; sometimes it is severe and sometimes it is relatively mild. It may result in permanent paralysis in some parts of the body.

Ways in which polio is transmitted

- It is transmitted from the sick person via airborne particles that are emitted when coughing, sneezing or speaking.
- It may also be spread by contamination of food or drink with particles from the stools of a sick person by flies and other insects.

Incubation period

The incubation period of polio lasts from 3 to 21 days, and may last longer than that.

Symptoms of polio

- Symptoms include high fever, headache, stiffness in the back and neck, asymmetrical weakness of various muscles, sensitivity to touch, difficulty swallowing, muscle pain, loss of superficial and deep reflexes, paresthesia (pins and needles), irritability, constipation, or difficulty urinating.
- There may be paralysis of the muscles of the respiratory system, leading to death if artificial means of respiration (such as an “iron lung”) are not used.

Prevention and treatment

1. Mandatory vaccination at the ages of two months, four months and six months, followed by booster shots.
2. Isolation of the patient so that the disease will not be spread to others.
3. Physiotherapy in the hospital to help rehabilitate the muscle fibres affected by the disease.

Whooping cough (pertussis)

Whooping cough is a contagious bacterial disease caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. The disease is transmitted by touching the mouth of the patient or by means of airborne particles emitted when sneezing or coughing, or by touching items belonging to the patient. The patient suffers from a severe, ongoing and troublesome cough; bouts of coughing end with the characteristic “whooping” sound when he or she breathes in.

Incubation period

The incubation period of whooping cough lasts between four and twenty-one days, with an average of seven days

Symptoms of whooping cough

1. Bouts of coughing that come constantly and are followed by the “whoop”, from which the illness gets its common name.
2. High temperature
3. Inhalation with a sound like that of a rooster
4. Cyanosis (bluish skin) when coughing because of low oxygen levels in the blood.

Most serious complications of whooping cough

1. Pneumonia, which may appear 3 to 5 weeks after the onset of illness
2. Umbilical hernia or rectal prolapse
3. Inflammation of the meninges and brain, which appears in the form of convulsions and loss of consciousness
4. Bronchitis

Prevention and treatment of whooping cough

1. Vaccination against this illness with the DTaP vaccine at the ages of two months, four months and six months, followed by booster shots
2. Isolation of the patient and not allowing him to mix with other children so that he will not transmit the illness.
3. Erythromycin (an antibiotic) may be used to shorten the period of infectiousness and thus reduce spread of the disease
4. Ventilation of the patient’s room and good nutrition

Measles



Measles is a contagious infection of the respiratory system caused by a virus. It poses a great danger to children because one child in fifteen who gets this illness will suffer complications from it. The illness is transmitted via airborne particles from the nose and mouth of an infected individual.

Incubation period

The incubation period varies between ten and fourteen days; measles may be transmitted both before and after the appearance of the characteristic rash.

Symptoms of measles

1. High temperature
2. Sneezing, coughing, blocked nose and swollen eyes
3. The rash appears after 4 to 5 days. It appears on the forehead and cheeks, then after that it appears on the face, extremities, stomach and back.
4. The temperature rises noticeably with the increase in coughing, swelling of the eyes and sensitivity to light.

Prevention and treatment

1. Vaccination with the MMR vaccine according to the guidelines followed by doctors in your country or region.
2. Isolation of the patient as much as possible from healthy individuals.
3. Complete bed rest in a dimly-lit room.
4. Paying attention to the child's diet and giving him a large amount of liquids.
5. Acetaminophen (Paracetamol) or ibuprofen may help ease fever symptoms. Never give Aspirin to a child.
6. The child should not be given antibiotics except in the case of a secondary bacterial infection.
7. Not exposing the child to sunlight or heat.
8. Attention should be paid to controlling infection of the membranes of the eye.

Rubella (German measles)

Rubella has nothing to do with measles, despite its common name ("German measles"). It is a viral illness that primarily affects the skin and lymph nodes, and causes a mild rash in small children. The main concern with German measles is if it affects a pregnant woman; rubella in a pregnant woman may cause severe defects in the developing foetus. German measles is caused by the rubella virus. It is transmitted via airborne particles from the sick person.

Incubation period

The incubation period varies from between fourteen and twenty days from first exposure to the illness.

Symptoms of German measles

1. Symptoms similar to those of the common cold, such as coughing, sneezing, blocked nose and high temperature.
2. Rash that lasts for three days
3. There may be some red spots in the mouth
4. The skin may shed in very small flakes where the rash appeared

Prevention and treatment

1. Vaccination with the MMR vaccine
2. Isolation of the patient
3. There is no specific treatment for rubella; care is focused on lessening the impact of symptoms if needed.

Rheumatic fever

This is an inflammatory disease that occurs as a result of infection with *Streptococcus* bacteria. The source of the infection is the patient himself if he suffers repeated throat and tonsil infections. This illness often appears in children between the ages of six and twelve years.

Causes of rheumatic fever

1. Rheumatic fever may be the result of an abnormal immune response in individuals who are genetically predisposed to it, in that the immune system attacks various parts of the body and not just the *Streptococcus* bacteria.
2. Rheumatic fever may be preceded by a respiratory infection that shows no symptoms.

Is rheumatic fever a hereditary disease?

No, it is not a hereditary disease but hereditary factors may play a role in increasing susceptibility to this disease.

Is rheumatic fever contagious?

Rheumatic fever is regarded as a non-contagious illness. However, what may be contagious is the Streptococcus throat infection. What contributes to the spread of infection with this bacterium is overcrowding in schools, homes and marketplaces.

Symptoms of rheumatic fever

1. High temperature
2. Polyarthrititis, a temporary migrating inflammation of the large joints, usually starting in the legs and migrating upwards
3. Carditis or inflammation of the heart muscle; this is the most serious of the symptoms
4. Loss of appetite and feeling exhausted by the slightest effort
5. A rash may appear on the trunk or arms.

Blood tests for diagnosis of rheumatic fever

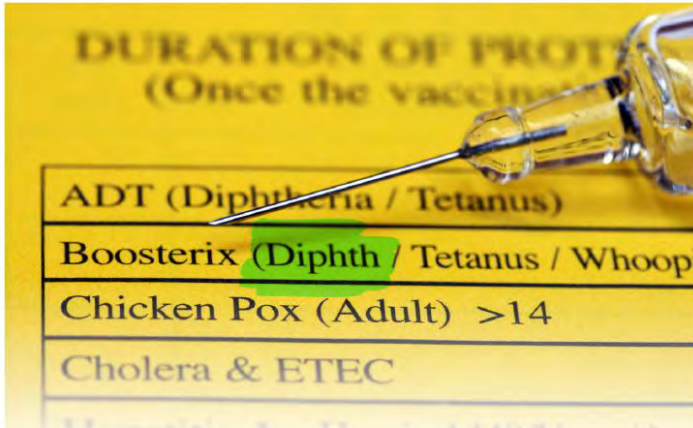


Blood tests may be used to diagnose rheumatic fever, in addition to the symptoms mentioned above. Taking a swab from the throat to check for Streptococcus bacteria by means of cultivation in the lab is not regarded as useful in diagnosing this disease because most of the Streptococcus bacteria disappear from the throat with the onset of this illness. But it is essential to explain that the presence of Streptococcus bacteria in the blood does not mean that the patient can be diagnosed with rheumatic fever; rather that only means the infection has caused the immune system to produce some antibodies to the bacteria.

Prevention and treatment

1. Keeping away from crowded places and improving the environment in which the child lives.
2. Giving the child appropriate treatment if he suffers from repeated infections of the throat and tonsils.
3. When the child recovers from the illness, you should ask the doctor how to prevent reoccurrence of the illness.
4. Using extended-release penicillin for three weeks to prevent relapse.
5. Treating symptoms that accompany the illness, such as inflammation of the heart and joints.

Diphtheria



Diphtheria is a severe bacterial disease. The word diphtheria refers to a number of contagious diseases that are caused by the *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* bacterium. It is transmitted via airborne particles or direct physical contact with a person who is infected, or contact with infected objects or foods.

The bacteria that causes diphtheria most commonly infects the nose and throat. The throat infection causes a grey to black, tough, fiber-like covering, which can block the airways. In some cases, diphtheria may first infect the skin, producing skin lesions.

Once infected, toxins produced by the bacteria can spread through the bloodstream to other organs, such as the heart, and cause significant damage.

Incubation period

The incubation period varies between one and seven days

Symptoms of diphtheria

- Bluish coloration of the skin (cyanosis)
- Bloody, watery drainage from nose

- Breathing problems
 - o Difficulty breathing
 - o Rapid breathing
 - o Stridor (high-pitched wheezing sound)
- Chills
- Croup-like (barking) cough
- Drooling (suggests airway blockage is about to occur)
- Fever
- Hoarseness
- Painful swallowing
- Skin lesions (usually seen in tropical areas)
- Sore throat (may range from mild to severe)

Complications of diphtheria

1. Inflammation of the heart muscle (myocarditis) which may lead to heart failure
2. Inflammation of the nerves which may lead to temporary paralysis.
3. Poor blood circulation accompanied by severe sweating, cyanosis and coldness in the extremities. There is usually hyperventilation or rapid breathing.
4. Inflammation of the lungs
5. Inflammation and impaired function of the kidneys

Prevention and treatment

1. Vaccination against diphtheria
2. Quickly starting treatment under the supervision of a doctor

3. Giving the patient a large dose of penicillin solution by injection.
4. Giving the patient foods that are easy to swallow such as yoghurt and juice
5. Complete rest for the patient and quickly treating any complications
6. Isolating the patient completely from healthy children

Accident prevention

Keeping your child safe from accidents

Small children are at more risk than others of accidents because they do not yet understand the reality of the things around them. For example, a child who is at risk of falling from the balcony or from a chair does not yet know about gravity and weight; a child who is at risk of poisoning does not know the harmful effects of what he is putting in his mouth.

Unfortunately, accidents involving children are very common as a result of parents not making the home safe and not taking necessary safety precautions to reduce or prevent accidents to their children.

From the time the child is able to crawl or walk, he has a love of exploring and he will play with everything he finds without realizing the danger of the thing he is playing with.

Hence the parents have to provide a safe environment for their children. I shall explain below some of the measures that need to be taken in order to prevent accidents.



Prevention of poisoning

Many hospital emergency rooms see various cases of poisoning in children, and that is usually because safety measures have not been taken in the home.

The most common substances that could lead to poisoning in children

1. Iron pills taken by the mother to treat anaemia, and other pills that may look like candy to a small child
2. All kinds of petroleum-based products such as paraffin and gasoline
3. Domestic insecticides
4. Laundry stain removers
5. Nail polish remover
6. Tranquillisers and contraceptive pills
7. Cigarettes

Measures to prevent poisoning

- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children
- Put all insecticides and other cleaning products out of the reach of children
- None of these medicines should look like candy so that the child will not think that the medicine is candy that he can eat at any time
- Keep cosmetics out of the reach of children
- Try not to leave cigarette packets where children can get them; swallowing one cigarette could lead to death in a one-year-old child
- Put locks on cupboards and drawers in which you keep dangerous things such as medicines, insecticides and other things that could harm your child

Prevention of choking and suffocation

To prevent your child from choking or suffocation:

- Keep small items out of the reach of children, such as coins, beads and peanuts
- Cut fruit into very small pieces or mash it so that it does not cause the child to choke
- Cut sausages lengthways, not into round pieces
- Do not let the child play with plastic bags, lest he put them on his head or mouth, thus exposing himself to the risk of suffocation
- Make sure that there are no strings attached to the curtains or furnishings of the home, lest the child wrap them around his neck
- Try to make sure that the children's toys are free of small pieces that can be swallowed. The toys should also be large and free of sharp corners
- Keep the toilet seat closed and locked so that the child cannot fall into the toilet
- The mother should not sleep next to her child in the same bed, because of the danger that she may roll over onto him or her breast may cover the child's mouth, making it impossible for him to breathe, or she may inadvertently push the pillow over his head.
- Keep unused fridges and empty cupboards away from children or keep them firmly closed so that the child cannot get into them and close the door on himself, which leads to the risk of suffocation
- Keep gas canisters, especially those that are unused, out of reach of children so that they cannot open them.

Prevention of broken bones and falls from high places

1. Do not leave liquids or wet spots that can cause slips and falls on the floors of the house
2. Do not use small rugs that may slip on tiled floors, so that the children cannot fall on them
3. Cover the bathroom floor and the bottom of the bathtub with rubber mats so that the child cannot slip
4. Avoid using baby-walkers so that the child is not exposed to the risk of crashing into furniture or falling down the stairs
5. Do not leave tables or chairs near windows or balconies
6. Use barriers to keep children away from windows and places where they would usually climb
7. Choose non-slip tiles or ceramic flooring
8. Keep a close eye on children, especially when they first start to crawl and walk, so as to avoid other dangers

Prevention of fire and electric shock

- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children and keep them in a locked cupboard or drawer.
- Keep gas canisters out of the reach of children so that they cannot play with them.
- Keep children away from gas stoves and electric heaters so that their clothes cannot catch fire.
- Cover all electrical outlets so that the child cannot put his fingers in them.
- Keep fire extinguishers in the home and learn how to use them.
- Avoid carrying the child whilst cooking, ironing or smoking.
- Do not put hotplates, vessels or hot irons on the ground so that the child is not at risk of being burnt by them. After you have finished using the iron, put it somewhere out of the reach of children.
- Do not put a long tablecloth on the dining table so that the child cannot pull it, which may result in hot foods on the table falling onto him and burning him.

First Aid for children



Disclaimer: This information is for information purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, emergency treatment or formal first-aid training. Do not use this information to diagnose or develop a treatment plan for a health problem or disease without consulting a qualified health care provider. If you're in a life-threatening or emergency medical situation, seek medical assistance immediately.

First Aid for poisoning

How do I know if my child has consumed a poisonous substance?

- Sudden severe cramps or pain in the abdomen without a rise in temperature.
- If you find your child with an empty bottle of medicine or any other toxic substance next to him.
- If you see a change in colour in the child's mouth, or burns in his mouth.

- Sudden difficulty in breathing.
- Sudden nausea or vomiting.
- Increase in saliva and a change in its smell.

What to do in the event of poisoning

Take the toxic substance out of the child's hand and keep everything that is left of it, or the empty bottle, so that you can show it to the doctor. If the substance has been swallowed, remove anything that remains in the mouth.

- Giving the child medicine such as ipecac to induce vomiting is not recommended as it may do more harm than good.
- If the child has poured a toxic substance on his body, put on clean gloves and clean up whatever is left of the toxic substance from the child's body, then remove his clothes and wash his body with cool or tepid water.
- Call an ambulance or take the child to the nearest hospital for treatment.
- Take with you whatever is left of the toxic substance or the container so that you can show it to the doctor.

First aid for burns

Fires are, of course, very dangerous for children; most household accidents are caused by fire.

The child may be burnt as a result of exposure to flames or heat of the fire, or because of hot liquids or metal falling on him, or it may be a chemical burn or the result of an electric shock.

Burns are divided into different categories:

1. First degree: red and painful
2. Second degree: red, with blisters and pain
3. Third degree: stiff and white/brown
4. Fourth degree: black; charred with eschar (slough or piece of dead tissue that is cast off from the surface of the skin)

First Aid for first and second degree burns

- Cool the burn with cool (not cold) water as soon as possible; hold the affected area until the tap or immerse in cool water. Continue for 10 to 15 minutes or until pain subsides.
- Wrap the affected part loosely with a sterile gauze bandage or clean cloth - do not use fluffy cotton or other material that may get lint in the wound.
- If the burn affects the face or eyes, or covers a large area, seek medical help.
- Do not burst or tamper with any blisters, because they protect the skin from infection.

First Aid for third and fourth degree burns

- Call an ambulance immediately
- Do not remove burned clothing. Do make sure the victim is no longer in contact with smouldering materials or exposed to smoke or heat.
- Do not immerse large severe burns in cold water. Doing so could cause a drop in body temperature (hypothermia) and make the casualty go into shock.
- Check for signs of circulation (breathing, coughing or movement). If there is no breathing or other sign of circulation, begin CPR.
- Elevate the burned body part or parts. Raise above heart level, when possible.
- Cover the area of the burn. Use a cool, damp, sterile bandage; clean, damp cloth; or damp towels.

Chemical burns

- Remove the child's clothing
- Clean the affected area by gently washing it with cool water
- Wrap the area loosely with sterile gauze or clean cloth

- Take a look at the information on the container; in most cases there are instructions on how to deal with burns caused by the substance in question.

In the event of a severe and/or extensive burn, burns on the eyes or face, or symptoms of shock (such as fainting, pale complexion or breathing in a noticeably shallow manner), seek emergency medical assistance immediately.

First Aid for breaks and fractures



Broken bones are not uncommon among children, especially as they grow older and more adventurous. A broken bone (or fracture, as it is called by doctors) requires medical attention. The following are indications of a fracture:

- The child is not able to move the affected part normally.
- There is intense and unbearable pain.
- There is swelling at the site of the break.

In some cases, it may be possible to hear the sound of the fracture when it happens. In an “open fracture”, the end of the broken bone protrudes from the skin.

First Aid for a child with a fracture

- Call for emergency medical help.
- Stop the bleeding if it is an open fracture.
- Do not move the child if you suspect a fracture in the head, neck or back.
- Do not move the child unless it is necessary to avoid further injury.
- Support the affected limb in a comfortable position to avoid further damage, and keep the bone in place until professional help arrives.
- Do not attempt to set the bone or push an exposed bone back into place.
- Do not give the child anything to eat or drink until he has been seen by a doctor, in case surgery requiring a general anaesthetic is needed.
- Do not give the child any painkillers until he has been seen by a doctor.
- Apply ice packs to reduce swelling and pain. If no ice pack is available, a bag of frozen vegetables can be used.

First Aid for near drowning

Near drowning refers to survival of a drowning event involving unconsciousness or water inhalation.

The child may be involved in an accident that causes him to inhale water, such as falling into a swimming pool or bathtub, or falling from your arms on the beach. If that happens, pick your child up immediately and do the following:

- Call an ambulance
- Perform CPR if he has lost consciousness, has no pulse and/or is not breathing

- Remove wet clothing and cover him with blankets to prevent hypothermia

First Aid for wounds and bleeding

Minor cuts and scrapes are part of childhood and in most cases do not need medical attention. The following points should be borne in mind when dealing with such injuries:

- Stop any bleeding by applying pressure to the wound with a piece of gauze or a clean cloth.
- Clean the wound with surgical spirits or rubbing alcohol
- Small pieces of debris can be removed using tweezers (clean them first with rubbing alcohol). Larger pieces or anything deeply embedded should be removed by a doctor.
- Apply a topical anti-septic such as Neosporin or Polysporin to prevent infection
- Put a clean dressing or band-aid on the wound. Make sure the gauze pad is large enough to cover the wound completely.
- If the bleeding does not stop and seeps through the dressing, put another dressing over the first one.
- Take the child to a doctor or emergency room to have the wound stitched if it is large.

First Aid for bites and stings

Animal bites

- A bite from an animal may transmit diseases or infection. If there is the possibility that the animal may have rabies, get medical help at once; infection may be prevented if the child is given immunization immediately
- Allow some bleeding to cleanse the wound, but if bleeding is severe, control it by applying pressure

- Wash the wound with antiseptic soap and cover it with a dressing

Snake bites

If you live in a region where venomous snakes exist, teach your child to beware of snakes and not to disturb them or try to pick them up. If a snake bite does occur, do the following:

- Keep the affected limb below heart level
- Apply a constricting band to slow the spread of poison: tie the band between the bite and the heart, 5-10 cm above the wound. Do not tie it too tight; you should be able to slip two fingers under it.

It is not recommended to try to suck the poison out or to cut the skin where the bite occurred

Insect bites and stings

Most insect bites and stings cause a few days of itching and mild swelling; the symptoms may be annoying and uncomfortable for your child, but they are not usually serious. In mild cases such as these, the following steps may be taken:

- Reassure and comfort your child
- Remove the stinger, especially if it is stuck in the skin. This will prevent the release of more venom.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply an ice pack to reduce pain and swelling.
- Apply hydrocortisone cream (0.5 percent or 1 percent), calamine lotion or a baking soda paste — with a ratio of 3 teaspoons (15 ml) baking soda to 1 teaspoon (5 ml) water — to the bite or sting several times a day until symptoms subside.
- Give the child some antihistamine containing diphenhydramine (Benadryl, Tylenol Severe Allergy) or chlorpheniramine maleate (Chlor-Trimeton, Actifed).

- There may be some delayed reactions, such as fever, hives, painful joints and swollen glands. If this happens take your child to the doctor.

In some children, allergies to stings from bees, wasps and so on may lead to severe reactions (anaphylaxis). Symptoms of a severe reaction include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Facial swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Faintness or dizziness
- Abdominal cramps or pain
- Rapid heartbeat
- Shock

This is a medical emergency: call an ambulance immediately. If you know that your child is allergic to insect venom and your doctor has prescribed an auto-injector of epinephrine, make sure you know how to use it, and make sure teachers etc know too.

First Aid for eye injuries



The child may get a foreign body in his eye, such as a small flying insect, dust or sand. If that happens:

- Gently pull the lower eyelid out, then look for the foreign body. If you cannot find it, gently lift the upper eyelid until you find it.
- Then remove the foreign body with the corner of a wet tissue or clean, lint-free cloth.
- Wash the child's eye with water until the foreign body is completely removed
- If the foreign body cannot be removed and the eye is still red and swollen, you have to go to the doctor.
- If you cannot remove the object or it is embedded in the eyeball, seek medical help immediately

These are just a few of the scenarios in which a child may need first aid. It is highly recommended for parents to learn first aid and know what to do if an emergency arises, before any emergency arises. First Aid courses are available in many countries and regions; there is also a great deal of information on the internet.

