



Normal Growth for Babies

As your baby grows we know that they are on a healthy path when they reach a variety of milestones. Tools like the Nipissing District Developmental Screen and the WHO Growth Charts for Canada can be used to assess your child's overall growth and development. The information below is intended for babies who are born full term and are healthy.

Is Baby Getting Enough to Grow On?

Look at the Baby

Always remember to look at your baby and see if he or she looks well-proportioned in length and weight for age. On a day to day basis look for:

- A gently rounded tummy.
- Baby looks bright-eyed and alert.

Urine

- Should be pale and odourless.
- Diapers should be heavy or soaking after 5 days (compare a wet and a dry diaper for weight).
- No dark urine. No orange crystals.

Bowel Movements

- **0-24 hours:** Meconium Stools ...black to dark green tarry stools in small amounts
- **By day 2-3:** Transitional Stools ...black to green in increasing amounts
- **By day 4-7:** Breastmilk Stools ...yellow stools in increasing amounts; stools will have white flecks and smell mustardy

Newborn infants

- Weight loss just after birth of about 7% is common; up to 10% is the normal range.
- During labour if mother received IV medication baby may have extra fluids that impact baby weight loss.

- Most babies start to gain weight by about day 5, and return to birth weight by about 10-14 days.
- Breastfeed baby whenever baby shows early hunger cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Skin to skin with mom or dad supports infant attachment and increases success for nursing.
- Breastfed babies tend to grow more quickly than non-breastfed babies in the first six months and tend to grow more slowly in the second six months of life. Non-breastfed babies tend to grow faster in the second six months of life.

Infants after return to birth weight

- It is important to see a steady growth pattern in weight gain and length

Typical pattern of weight gain

- $\frac{2}{3}$ – $1\frac{1}{4}$ oz per day for the first 3–4 months of age
- 4 oz per week (or 1 lb per month) from 2-4 months
- 3 oz per week (just under 1 lb per month) from 4-5 months
- 2 oz per week (or 1/2 lb per month) from 6-12 months

Typical pattern of length

- Length is more reliable indicator of baby growing than weight, however is more difficult to measure accurately.
- **0-6 months** about 1 inch/ 2.5 cm per month
- **7-12 months** about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch/ 1.25 cm per month

Head circumference

- The first year is a time of very rapid brain growth and therefore head growth
- At age 18 months the brain has reached 75% of adult size.
- Head circumference is usually done by a healthcare provider at baby visits.

World Health Organization suggest baby be weighed and measured at

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| • 1 week | • 9 month (optional) |
| • 2 week | • 12 month |
| • 2 month | • 18 month |
| • 4 month | • 24 month |
| • 6 month | |

Once per year from 2 years to adolescents

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