Your baby's movements
Up to three months of age, most of your baby's movements are uncontrolled.

Babies have reflex movements, which they use for survival. Some of these are sucking, sneezing and swallowing. Some reflex movements – like throwing their arms out, stiffening and crying when they hear a noise – disappear after a short time.

At one month
At one month, most babies:
• turn their head and eyes towards light
• watch faces while being fed or talked to
• may smile to show pleasure.

Between one and three months
Between one and three months, most babies:
• become stronger
• lift their head and upper chest and may start using their arms for support when on their tummy
• show an increasing awareness of people
• smile and coo to show pleasure
• use joyful movements when expecting an enjoyable event, like a bath or feed time.

Feeding
Breastmilk or infant formula is all the food your baby needs until around six months. Your baby's body is not ready for solids before this time.

Tummy time
Even though you have been encouraged to sleep your baby on their back, it is very important for babies to have some 'tummy time' every day when they are awake.

This will help your baby to develop essential movements and skills, like rolling, sitting, crawling and hand skills.

At first, this can be following bath time when you are drying your baby, or during a massage time.

If your baby cries or becomes distressed:
• try tummy time for a shorter time but more often
• distract the baby’s attention by talking to your baby and using toys
• keep persisting!

At a later stage – by three months – your baby should be playing on his or her tummy when awake and you are with them.
Safety

Babies’ early movements are uncontrolled. To help keep your baby safe, remember the following:

- Hold your baby when feeding them a bottle, rather than propping them up. Babies can vomit or inhale milk.
- Do not heat your baby’s bottle in a microwave oven. The milk can heat unevenly, risking scalding your baby’s mouth.
- Never leave your baby alone on a change table or other furniture (especially a bed), in the bath, in the car or near any family pets.
- Always make sure your baby is strapped in securely when they’re in a pram, stroller or shopping trolley.
- Protect your baby from sun and heat. Seek shade when outdoors and use protective clothing and a hat.
- Every time your baby travels in a car, make sure you use an approved baby capsule or child restraint. Never leave your baby alone in a car – not even for a few minutes.
- Look inside mittens, booties and socks to be sure there are no loops or threads that can wind around your baby’s fingers and toes and cut off blood circulation.
- Never leave your baby alone during bath time. Babies should never be left in the care of older children, no matter how reliable they seem.
- Make sure there are no objects small enough to swallow around where your baby is playing. Pins, batteries, dead insects, buttons, beads, nuts, coins and other small objects may cause your baby to choke. Cigarette butts are poisonous to your children.
- Ensure that your baby is sleeping safely, according to the guidelines in the Keeping your baby safe fact sheet.

More information

If you would like more information about your child’s development or you are concerned about your child, talk to your child health nurse or your doctor.

You could also ask at your local library for books on child development.

Acknowledgement

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