Help Me Be Healthy

Date: ________________________________

My name is ________________________________.

I weigh ________ pounds. I am ________ inches long.

A special note for me: ____________________________________________________________

Birth to 6 months
I am your baby.

Please help me.

I want to grow strong in body, heart, and mind. I grow best when you:

❤️ Hold and cuddle me.
❤️ Smile and talk to me.
❤️ Listen to me when I “talk” to you with my face and body.

Feed me right…with food and love.

❤️ Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron for the first year. Breast milk or formula is the only food I need for the first 6 months.

❤️ I know when I need to eat. Feed me when I show I am hungry. I know how much to eat. Let me eat until I show I am full.

❤️ Please talk to the WIC nutritionist or a WIC breastfeeding consultant if you need help recognizing my needs.

I will show you when I am hungry. I will move my arms and legs a lot. I will turn my head and open my mouth. I might suck on my hand or fuss a little. Please feed me on schedule or before I cry. I eat best when I am calm. Find a quiet place when it is time for me to eat.

I will show you when I am full. I will stop sucking and let go of the nipple. I will look relaxed or sleepy. Ask me if I am full and offer the breast or bottle again to make sure I do not want more to eat. Let me decide if I want to stop eating. Once I get full, I might frown, fuss, and kick if you keep feeding me.

Please help me.
You want the best for me!

I eat more when I am having a growth spurt. I will want to nurse longer or more often at the breast. Or, I may act hungry after I finish a bottle. If you breastfeed me, your body will make more milk, so don’t worry. If I drink formula, mix a little more formula and add it to the bottle.

**How will you know I am eating enough?** I wet 6 or more diapers a day and the doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

**Birth to 4 months**-
I might want to eat every 2 to 3 hours (about 8 to 12 times in 24 hours). My stomach can hold about 2 to 3 ounces at a time.

**4 to 6 months**-
I might want to eat every 3 to 4 hours (about 6 to 8 times in 24 hours). My stomach can hold about 4 to 6 ounces at a time.

**Hold me when you feed me.** I feel safe in your arms. Look at my face and into my eyes. I will learn to look back. I love to look at your face. Talk to me. I will learn to smile and coo.

Sometimes I may take a break from eating. I am not full yet; I just want to rest or share some special time with you.

Help me stay awake while you feed me. If I fall asleep with milk in my mouth, I could choke or get an earache.

I need your touch.
Keep me safe.

I can get sick from germs and the wrong food. Please:

❤️ Wash your hands before you feed me or fix my food and formula.

❤️ If you use a bottle to feed me, put only pumped breast milk or formula in it.

❤️ Mix up formula following the directions on the can or how the doctor tells you.

❤️ Store bottles of breast milk or formula in the refrigerator. Use them within 48 hours.

❤️ Never heat my bottle or food in a microwave oven. It can get too hot and burn my mouth.

❤️ Throw out breast milk or formula left in the bottle when I am finished eating.

❤️ Do not feed me water, unless the doctor tells you to.

❤️ Do not feed me honey or food made with honey, it can make me sick.

❤️ Do not let me eat (or taste) the food you are eating, I may not be ready.

When can I try a new food?

I grow best on breast milk or formula. Do not feed me any other food until I am 6 months old. Ask my doctor or the WIC Nutritionist if I am ready to try a new food. I must be able to:

❤️ Sit up and hold my head steady.

❤️ Show I want food by opening my mouth to take it from a spoon.

❤️ Show I do not want food by closing my mouth or turning my head away from you.
My first food must be plain and smooth. Start me out with the baby rice cereal you get from WIC. Mix the cereal in a bowl with breast milk or formula. Start me out with thin cereal (like cream soup).

Sit and face me. Smile and tell me I get to taste cereal. Put a little cereal on a baby spoon. Touch my lips with it. If I won’t eat the cereal, wait a week and try again. If I eat the cereal, feed it to me once a day.

If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, stop feeding me the cereal. Tell the doctor. These are signs that I might not be ready. It may take one week to see any signs.

After a week, if I do not show any signs, it is safe for me to eat rice cereal. You can make it thicker and let me eat a little more.

I might eat 2 or more tablespoons of cereal twice a day. Throw out any cereal left in the dish after I finish eating.

The next baby cereal to try is oatmeal or barley. Pick one to try first. Let me eat it for a week. Watch for signs I am not ready. If I do not show any signs, it is safe for me to eat it.

Please talk to the WIC Nutritionist if you have questions about feeding me.
Spit up...Gas...Dirty Diapers

Babies must get used to food in their tummies. So, we sometimes spit up, get gas, grunt and turn red when we have a bowel movement. It does not hurt and goes away as we grow.

♥ I spit up less if I am calm when I eat and stop eating when I get full.
♥ I swallow air when I eat. If I swallow too much, I might need to be burped. Hold me with my tummy against your chest or lap. Gently pat or rub my back.
♥ I might have one or more bowel movements a day. Sometimes, I might not have any for a day or two. This is not constipation. Constipation is a hard, dry stool that hurts to pass and makes me cry.

Please don’t keep me in a baby carrier or infant seat. Put me on a blanket on the floor. Sit with me on the floor. Watch how I stretch and kick my legs and move my arms. I am making them stronger.

Put me on my tummy. I will learn to push myself up with my arms. I will learn to roll over.

Play with me!
Look what I can do!

I am ready to learn about you, about me, and the world I live in. I learn best when I feel happy, loved, and safe.

**Birth to 3 months...**

The world is new to me and it can be scary. I cry a lot at first. Crying is my way to say I need you. When you come to me, I calm down. I learn that you care.

I must learn what day and night are. At first, I sleep 2 to 3 hours, wake up, eat, and go back to sleep again. It might take 3 months or more to learn to sleep through the night. Please be patient as I learn.

I know your voice. I like to watch you and learn what you do. Show things to me and tell me about them.

**4 to 6 months...**

I start to settle into a routine. I can sleep longer at night. I am growing strong and active.

I can hold my head up. I also use my hands to pick things up and put them in my mouth. Keep an eye on me so I don’t choke or swallow anything that could hurt me.

I know my name when you say it. I babble *ba-ba-ba!* and I laugh. Let’s play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. Please read to me. Show me the pictures and tell me what they are.
Health and Safety Tips

♥ I need check ups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor a few days after I am born and again before one month, then at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months of age.

♥ If I am breastfed, ask the doctor if I need a vitamin D supplement.

♥ Clean my mouth after I eat. Wipe my gums with a clean, wet, soft cloth.

♥ Never put me to bed with a bottle or prop a bottle so that I have to eat by myself. I can choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth. I need you to hold and love me while I am eating.

♥ Put me on my back to sleep (unless the doctor says not to). Use a firm mattress. Keep pillows, quilts, and toys out of my bed.

♥ Never leave me alone at bath time or while changing me.

♥ It’s the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat before we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car’s back seat, facing backwards.

♥ Keep me away from cigarette smoke, drugs and alcohol. Those habits are not healthy for you or me.

Ask the WIC Nutritionist if you need help with any of these tips.