

Baby Development Guide

How you can support your baby's development



Introduction

This guide provides information on a baby’s development milestones and what to expect as they grows. It also explains what you can do as a parent to help your little one reach them.

Areas of Development

Babies grow and develop quickly in the first 1,001 days. This time is the most important for a child’s development. There are five areas of development that you can support your little one with. Remember, in each area of development, your baby will learn across others too. They are all interlinked.



Key Points

Worried About Your Baby’s Development?

If you worry about your baby’s development call the Health Visiting Duty Line at 020 8973 3490. They can help you with any development concerns until your baby is 4 years old. You can also visit: www.westlondon.nhs.uk/our-services/hounslow-community-healthcare/childrens-services/health-visiting. For signs of sickness please call either visit your GP, local hospital, or call either 111 or 999.

Child Development Reviews and the Red Book

Your baby is entitled to child development reviews at 10 months and at 27 months. The reviews are with the Health Visiting Team. They are important to see how your baby is developing. You will also get the Personal Child Health Record (PCHR), also known as the ‘Red Book’. Parents and carers are given it at a child’s birth to record their health and development.

Where to Find Information

The NHS Start for Life website provides information on baby’s development from local health professionals. Visit: www.nhs.uk/start-for-life to find out more.

Remember

No two babies are exactly alike. They will develop at their own pace and reach certain milestones at similar ages. But, it’s normal for a healthy baby to reach milestones early or late. You spend the most time with your baby and are the expert when it comes to knowing them. If you have concerns, contact the Health Visiting Team.

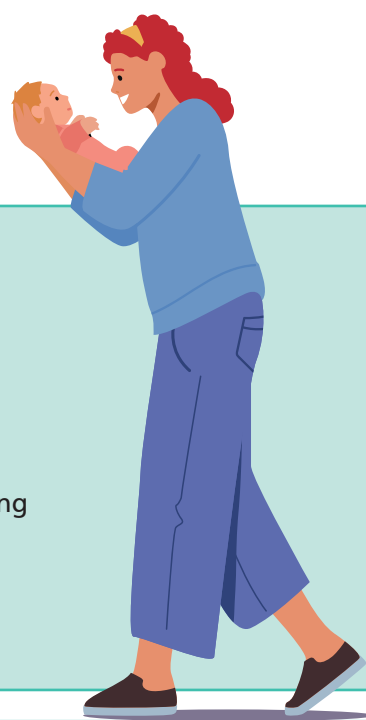
Contents

We have split our guide into sections with each section covering a development area. Other sections cover the vaccinations your baby will need, broader health milestones, and helpful resources.

Speech and Language	4-5
Fine Motor Skills	6-7
Gross Motor Skills	8-9
Cognitive	10-11
Social and Emotional	12-13
Vaccination Guide	14
Health Milestones	15
Helpful Resources	16-17

Speech & Language

Remember: Babies are unique and develop at different rates. But, if you have concerns, please speak to the Health Visiting Team.



0-6 months

- At 3 months, most babies can:**
- Begin to get noisy and make noises when you talk to them
 - Be startled at loud sounds
 - Have different cries for different needs such as being hungry, tired, or in need of comfort
 - Make new sounds other than crying like cooing, gurgling, babbling to themselves
- At 6 months, most babies can:**
- Begin to understand differences in voice tone and facial expressions
 - Add consonant sounds which makes babbling sound more like language
 - Learn to use body language and tone to express needs and imitate familiar sounds and actions

- Supporting your baby:**
- Hold your baby close and look at them as you talk to them. Babies love faces and will watch you and respond as you talk
 - Chat about what you're doing as you feed, change, and bathe them. Singing to your baby helps them tune in to the rhythm of language
 - Repeat the sounds your baby makes. This teaches your baby about listening and taking turns in a conversation
 - Talk in a sing-song voice – this helps to keep your baby's attention

6-12 months

- At 9 months, most babies can:**
- Make sounds and know they made them. They will try different sounds, like clicks, lip bubbles, and sounds you make
 - Respond to their name by looking (some as early as 4-6 months)
 - Listen carefully to you when you speak and will talk back with babbling sounds
 - Use early gestures such as clapping, waving, and shaking their head.
- At 12 months, most babies can:**
- May be saying simple sounds like mum and dad
 - Know several words and may shake their head for "no"
 - Understand how conversations work by taking turns
 - Understands between 3-50 words

- Supporting your baby:**
- Name and point to things you can both see, for example, "Look, a cat". This helps your baby learn words and, in time, they'll start to copy you
 - Start looking at books with your baby – you do not have to read the words on the page, just talk about what you can see
 - Only offer a dummy when it's time for sleep. It's hard to learn to talk with a dummy in your mouth. Aim to stop using dummies completely by 12 months
 - Play games like "peek-a-boo". This teaches your baby important skills like taking turns, paying attention and listening



12-18 months

- At 18 months, most toddlers can:**
- Try to say three or more words besides "mama" or "dada"
 - Follow one-step directions without any gestures, like giving you the toy
 - Start understanding a few simple words like "drink", "shoe", and "car"
 - Point to things when asked like familiar people or objects like "book" and "ball"
 - Gesture or point, often with words or sounds to show what they want

- Supporting your toddler:**
- If your child is trying to say a word but gets it wrong, like, pointing to a cat and say "Ca!" you should respond with the full word, "Yes, it's a cat", to help them learn
 - Increase your child's vocabulary by giving them choices, such as, "Do you want an apple or a banana?"
 - Toys and books that make a noise will help your child's listening skills
 - Sing nursery rhymes and songs together. Especially those with actions, like "Row, row, row your boat". Doing the actions helps your child to remember the words



18-24 months

- At 24 months, most toddlers can:**
- Understand more simple questions and instructions. For example, "where is your shoe?" and "show me your nose"
 - Say 50 or more single words, even though many of these are not very clear
 - Start to put short sentences together with 2-3 words, such as "more juice" or "bye nanny"
 - Ask questions like "what's that?" or "Where going?"

- Supporting your toddler:**
- Repeat words like, "Where are your shoes?", "Are you wearing your blue shoes?" and "Let's put your shoes on". Repetition helps your child to remember words
 - Use simple instructions like "Get your coat" or "Shut the door". Short and simple instructions will help your child understand
 - Try asking "Where's your..." and ask your child to point to their ear, nose, foot, and so on
 - Limit your child's daily TV time. Playing and listening to stories are more helpful for them when they are learning to talk



Top Tip: If English is not your first language, speak to them in your native language. It is best for your baby's development.



Fine Motor Skills



Remember: Babies are unique and grow at different rates. But, if you have concerns, speak to the Health Visiting Team.



0-6 months

At 3 months, most babies can:

- Open and close their hands and bring them to their mouth and swipe at dangling objects

At 6 months, most babies can:

- Start to grasp objects and reach with one hand at a time
- Shake and bang toys in their hands and use their hand to "rake" objects
- Push up onto elbows/forearms when on tummy

Supporting your baby:

- Give your child toys that stimulate many senses. For example, there are musical mobiles and rattles with different textures. There are also comforters with different materials and bright colours. As your baby develops, they will try reach for these and explore them with their hands
- From three months, let your baby grasp your fingers as you pull them up into sitting. Provide objects to see, hear, and grasps, for example, rattles

6-12 months

At 9 months, most babies can:

- Learn to grasp and release objects on purpose and tend to put everything in their mouth
- Hold their own bottle, drink independently, and begin to feed themselves. By holding food with whole hand and lidded cup with two hands
- Explore objects in many ways, often shaking, banging, throwing and dropping

At 12 months, most babies can:

- Hold small pieces of food with a pincer grasp to feed themselves. They are starting to explore using a spoon to bring food to their mouth.
- Start using a pincer grasp with their thumb and index finger to pick up small objects
- Transfer objects from one hand to the other and put objects into a container and take out
- Attempts to copy adult using a hair brush or tooth brush

Supporting your baby:

- Let your baby play at "dropping things", this helps in understanding the world
- From about nine months, encourage your baby to use a pincer grasp. This means holding things between the tips of their thumb and index finger. For example, they can use it to pick up raisins out of a small container. But, be sure to supervise your baby with small objects in case of choking
- Give your baby many chances to use their hands and fingers. For example, by eating finger foods and playing with water, sand, and finger paints. Encourage them to also join in action songs. They use their hands. For example, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star



12-18 months

At 18 months, most toddlers can:

- Stack two or three blocks
- Claps hands together and wave goodbye
- Hold a crayon with whole hand and makes "scribble" marks on paper
- Attempt to pull off shoes, socks, and gloves
- Attempt to scoop food with spoon and bring to mouth (may still be clumsy)
- Put a ring on a ring stacker
- Use fingers and hands to navigate objects in toys such as a puzzle or sorting box

Supporting your toddler:

- Encourage your child to do things that require two hands where one hand "holds" and the other "does". For example, mixing in a bowl is a physical task. So are building with blocks and unscrewing plastic bottle tops. And, using Duplo is one too. These are good for coordination and help the child decide which is their dominant hand
- Give your toddler finger foods and encourage them to feed themselves using a spoon



18-24 months

At 24 months, most toddlers can:

- Turn pages in a book one at a time
- Inserts circle, square, triangle into inset puzzle
- String larger-sized beads together
- Build towers of four or more blocks and the tower can stand
- Hold a crayon between the thumb and first three fingers. While holding, they can start to copy adults making lines up down and across a page
- Use a spoon to feed themselves correctly

Supporting your toddler:

- Do more complex finger actions. For example, roll out dough or pinch clay. Or, brush your teeth together
- Mix and match textures. Like drawing or playing in a sand pit or playing with textured balls or toys
- Encourage more two-handed activities. For example, asking me to pull up my socks and put on clothes, and passing me items I can hold



Top Tip: Toys make babies use their hands and fingers in many ways. This promotes the development of coordination, strength and precision





Gross Motor Skills



Remember: Babies are unique and grow at different rates. But, if you have concerns, please speak to the Health Visiting Team.



0-6 months

At 3 months, most babies can:

- Raise their head and chest when lying on their stomach
- Keep their head in the middle when lying on their back

At 6 months, most babies can:

- Learn to roll both ways (front to back, back to front)
- Grasp feet with hands
- Support their weight on legs when held and beginning to develop mobility on their tummy
- Bring their hand to their mouth

Supporting your baby:

- You can help by changing your baby's position frequently. Do not leave them in supported seating for too long. They need lots of chance to practice moving
- Play with your baby on the floor. Let them move about and encourage them to roll, be on their tummy, and sit with support. From three months, let your baby grasp your fingers as you pull them up into sitting
- Give your baby regular "tummy time". This helps them learn about movement and develop the skills to roll over, sit and crawl. You can do this from birth

6-12 months

At 9 months, most babies can:

- Sit unsupported and play with toys
- Pivot round on their tummy to get into a crawling position
- Crawl but some will choose to move around by bottom shuffling

At 12 months, most babies can:

- Get from sitting to lying on their tummy or to crawling
- Go from lying to sitting themselves and then pull themselves up to stand. They can also lower themselves in a controlled way
- Walk holding onto furniture (and may stand and walk independently)

Supporting your baby:

- Continue to give babies lots of time on the floor, lying on both their back and their tummy
- Give your child lots of chances to move about. This is an exciting time and exploring helps to build movement skills. But as they become more mobile, make sure dangerous objects are out of reach
- Baby walkers are not recommended. Evidence has shown that they raise the risk of accidents and can delay motor milestones



12-18 months

At 18 months, most toddlers can:

- Walk along with feet wide apart, but frequently fall and bump into furniture
- Get to standing unaided
- Climb up stairs in their own way and may attempt to step up them
- Enjoy walking with push-along toys such as a brick trolley

Supporting your toddler:

- Keep giving your child chances to develop their movement skills at home. But, make sure the home is free from hazards!
- Show your child how to get down from furniture and use the stairs safely. Push and pull toys can help build balance. Large, soft balls are great for rolling, throwing, and kicking. You can also use balloons and scarves for throwing and catching. They move slower and are easier to catch



18-24 months

At 24 months, most toddlers can:

- Squat during play
- Throw a ball forward and try to catch a ball with arms and body
- Jump with a galloping motion and use legs to move ride-on toys like sit on trucks/cars
- Walk up and down stairs when one hand is being held by an adult

Supporting your toddler:

- Enjoy the great outdoors with your child
- Let them walk, run, jump, play with a ball and climb in the playground. Physical freedom helps to develop motor skills, self-control and independence



Top Tip: Explore "50 things to do before you're five" for activities you can do with your child <https://shorturl.at/WD2xD>





Cognitive



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0-6 months

At 3 months, most babies can:

- Focus on moving objects and the movements of someone's face.
- Show anticipatory behaviours, like rooting and sucking.
- Detect differences in sound and see all colours in the visual spectrum

At 6 months, most babies can:

- Replicate facial expressions and recognise familiar faces
- React to familiar sounds and respond to facial expressions
- Respond to their name when called or to where it is coming from
- Focus on or follow objects and toys

Supporting your baby:

- Holding your baby and being responsive to your baby helps them to learn
- Having your baby look at you and follow your face as you move
- Having your baby move their eyes and body. Use rattles, toys with mirrors, lights, or colours such as red, white, and black
- Talking to them, playing peek-a-boo, singing songs

6-12 months

At 9 months, most babies can:

- Differentiate between pictures and different numbers of objects
- Understand the difference between animate and inanimate objects
- Determine how far away an object is by utilizing its relative size

At 12 months, most babies can:

- Enjoy themselves while looking at picture books
- Imitate basic actions and gestures and manipulate objects. Turning them over or put one object into another
- Respond to interactions with sounds and gestures and their own name
- Babies will start realising familiar faces or recognize words and simple phrases

Supporting your baby:

- Reading books to them each day
- Talking back to them during play, daily activities, and when they make sounds
- Helping them figure out how toys work
- Giving them toys that light up, make noise, or move
- Playing peek-a-boo and singing songs
- Talking to them using simple words to explain



12-18 months

At 18 months, most toddlers can:

- Realizes things still exist even when they cannot see them
- Find things in pictures when asked and follow simple objects when asked like a ball, teddy, or cup
- Learns about the world by touching or moving objects
- Expects events to follow routines and be predictable
- Follow simple directions and mimic gestures. For example, "Come and show me the ball" or waving and saying "bye-bye"

Supporting your toddler:

- Read books together, talk about the pictures, let them turn pages, and point to things
- Having them repeat words you say during playing
- Naming objects during play so they know what they're called
- Doing simple 3 to 5-piece knob puzzles
- Using toys that help your child problem solve, like stacking, opening and closing



18-24 months

At 24 months, most toddlers can:

- Do a 3-piece puzzle and take a lid off a jar or box
- Name common objects in their world like "coat" or "dinner"
- Start to put two words together like, "More cookie", or "Want book"
- Toddlers can match and sort colours
- Uses words to tell you what they want
- Pays attention when you read a book
- Can focus on one activity for more than five minutes

Supporting your toddler:

- While reading with your toddler, let them turn them pages and point to things in story. You can also point to animals in the book and ask your toddler to make that sound
- Do activities at your local Family Hubs, Children's Centres, Libraries, and Playgroups. Your toddler will be able to learn with others
- Pointing out colours, shapes, and sizes. Grouping like colours and sizes
- Doing puzzles with 9 to 12 pieces



Top Tip: It's never too early to read to your baby - they can learn and recognise your voice in the womb





Social and Emotional



Remember: Babies are unique and develop at different rates. But, if you have any concerns, please speak to the Health Visiting Team



0-6 months

At 3 months, most babies can:

- Be comforted by a familiar adult and respond positively to touch
- Listen to voices and show pleasure in response to a social situation
- Cry to communicate

At 6 months, most babies can:

- Give warm smiles and laughs, seek comfort when upset, recognize faces
- Pay attention or look when their name is called and respond to voices they know or recognise
- Notice two different people based on the way they look and sound

Supporting your baby:

- Watch and turn with your baby to see what they are doing. Then, do the same, like repeating the noises they make, cuddling, and making eye contact. This is called serve and return.
- You may notice whilst your baby is babbling or holding eye contact with you, they stop and look away. This is your baby showing they need a break in the interaction. They may then turn back to you and start babbling again. Your baby is telling you they are ready for more interactions.
- Becoming attuned to what your baby is telling you by their cries and movements. Their cries will be telling you if they are hungry, tired, have a wet nappy or want to be close to you.
- Skin-to-skin contact with your baby helps them bond with their parents. It provides positive hormones and is natural for dads too

6-12 months

At 9 months, most babies can:

- Respond to you when you talk to them or make gestures
- Start to understand your different emotions
- Express several different clear emotions

At 12 months, most babies can:

- Show happiness seeing their parents' face or their toys
- Know the difference between strangers and their family. They may cry when their parent goes away
- Imitate some of your actions (e.g. waving or getting dressed)
- Be able to self-soothe or calm themselves
- Cuddle or engage in close contact

Supporting your baby:

- Babies learn best when you give them space and time to explore. Creating safe, stimulating environments is important.
- Infants will start to smile socially and they will love getting a reaction back. Encourage them to do this again and again
- Children can become fearful of strangers. They can also show signs of anxiety and distress when out of their comfort zone. Cuddly toys, clothes or cloths can be provided as emotional support to a child
- When a baby is interested in something, stop and show your baby you are also interested. For example, when you're on a walk together, name the thing they are interested in and point to it



12-18 months

At 18 months, most toddlers can:

- Copy adult activities, such as driving a car, reading, or cooking
- Separate from you for brief periods of time
- Identify themselves in a mirror or photo
- Begin to explore more new things if a trusted adult is present
- Hug and kiss parents, other familiar people and pets
- Show interest in other children their age

Supporting your toddler:

- Use "yes" and "no" to clearly set reasonable limits. Briefly explain your reasons and be consistent
- Create many happy moments, such as family meals and bedtime routines
- Read stories and look at pictures that focus on emotions
- Have happy goodbye routines when you and family members leave each other
- Provide regular chances for your toddler to play beside children the same age



18-24 months

At 24 months, most toddlers can:

- Play alone for short periods of time and can-do some things without help
- Demonstrates concern for others
- Show fear, but can be reassured
- Shift between doing things independently and wanting help or comfort
- Follow simple instructions, like "give me the ball" and put two or more words together, like "more drink"

Supporting your toddler:

- Talk to your toddler ahead of time about new routines and events. Like, "At playgroup, we will sing songs and listen to stories."
- Introduce your toddler to a playmate or playgroup
- Talk about your toddler's emotions with them. This will help them understand. For example, say "your tears tell me you are feeling sad. Why is that?"
- Suggest ways to deal with feelings "when you feel angry, come and get a grown up for help"
- Have fun with your toddler, laughing together builds good feelings, relationships and bonds



Top Tip: Dedicated parent and infant relationship service (PAIRS)



Vaccination Guide

During the first 1,001 days of your baby’s life, they will need several vaccinations. These protect your baby from viruses and illness. The vaccines they will need to receive are:

- 6-in-1 (haemophilus influenzae type b, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria and Hep B)
- Rotavirus
- MenB
- Pneumococcal
- Hib/MenC
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella
- Flu

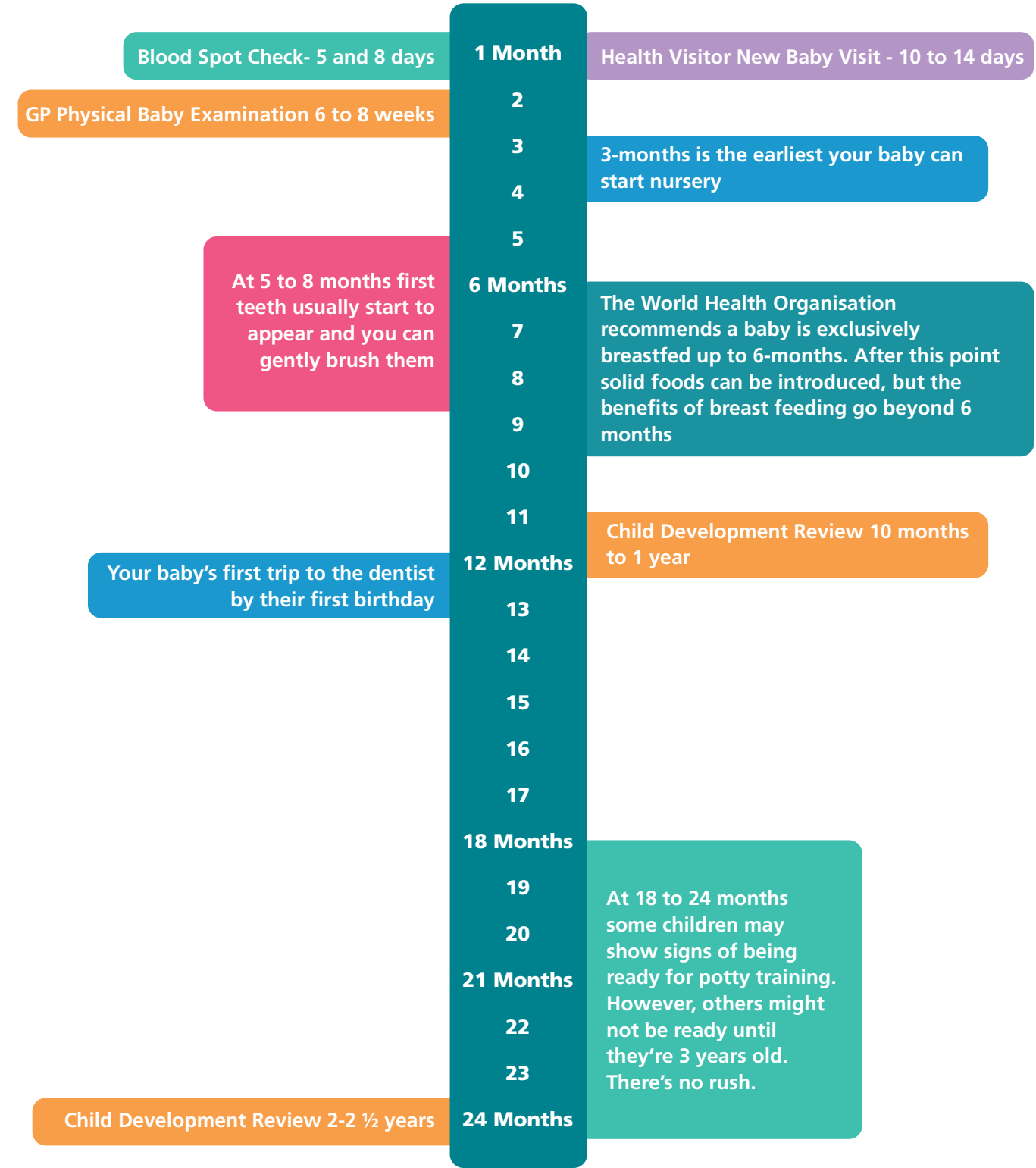
Below is a helpful process map that shows when your baby can receive the vaccines listed above. Vaccines will be administered by your GP. They will contact you to arrange an appointment when each vaccine is required below.

When	What is it	Why
2 months	6-in-1 Rota Virus MenB	6-in-1: To protect against 6 common childhood illnesses: diphtheria, hepatitis B, Hib (haemophilus influenzae type b), polio, tetanus, whooping cough. The full 3 doses make sure your baby develops a strong immunity to these 6 illnesses.
3 months	6-in-1 Rotavirus Pneumococcal	Rotavirus: To protect against rotavirus, a highly infectious stomach bug that typically affects babies and young children, causing diarrhoea and vomiting, tummy ache and a high temperature.
4 months	6-in-1 MenB	MenB: To protect your baby against meningoccal group B bacteria. MenB bacterial infection can cause meningitis and sepsis, which can lead to severe brain damage, amputations and, sometimes, death.
1 years	Hib MenC MMR Pneumococcal	Pneumococcal: To protect your baby against serious and potentially fatal pneumococcal infections. It's also known as the pneumonia vaccine.
	Men B	Hib/MenC: To boost your baby’s protection against Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and meningitis C. Hib and meningitis C infections are serious and potentially fatal. They can both cause meningitis and blood poisoning (sepsis).
2 years	Flu	Flu: To protect your child against the flu. Flu is caused by the influenza virus. It can be a very unpleasant illness for children. It can also lead to serious problems, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. Children can catch and spread flu easily.
3 years and 4 months to 4 years	MMR 4-in-1 pre-school booster	MMR: To protect your child against measles, mumps, and rubella (german measles). These highly infectious conditions can easily spread and lead to serious problems including meningitis, hearing loss and problems during pregnancy, and, sometimes in vulnerable groups, death.
		4-in-1 pre-school booster: To boost your child’s protection against four different serious conditions: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio.

Top Tip: If you worry or have questions about vaccinations, there is lots of info at: shorturl.at/zB1WD

Health Milestones (by when)

Before your baby leaves the hospital, your baby will have a screening test. This examines the baby’s eyes, hearing, and physical health. Up to 2 years, there are various things to expect, such as a first tooth, when to introduce solid food, and starting potty training that we have outlined below.



Weighing your Baby: It is recommended for your baby to be weighed every month up to 6 months. From 6 to 12 months, it should be once every two months. From 12 to 24 months, it should be once every three months or as the Health Visitor recommends. Every baby’s weight is individual. If you are worried about your baby’s weight, please contact your GP or Health Visitor Team.

Helpful Resources

Area	Website	Description	Link
Speech and Language	Ages and Stages	Find out more about baby speech and language and activities	www.speechandlanguage.org.uk/help-for-families/ages-and-stages
Cognitive	UNICEF	List of helpful learning activities	www.helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/HelpfulRes/Articles/WaysEncourageCognitiveDev/index.html
Gross Motor Skills	NHS	Oxford NHS Health Trust provide a range of activities to try to help your baby's gross motor skills	www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cit/resources/gross-motor-skills-babies-and-toddlers/
	APCP	The Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists (APCP) provide and tips and resources movement	https://apcp.csp.org.uk/content/early-years-movement-hub-0
Fine Motor Skills	Pampers	Pampers have a list of activities to help Fine Motor Skills	www.pampers.co.uk/toddler/development/article/baby-fine-motor-skills
Social and Emotional	LEAP	Lambeth Early Action Partnership provide information on social and emotional wellbeing	www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/baby-basics/bonding-with-your-baby/building-a-close-relationship-with-your-baby
Potty Training	ERIC	ERIC is a charity providing information and guidance on potty training	https://eric.org.uk/potty-training/
Nutrition	First Steps	Find out more about nutrition for your baby and when you're pregnant	www.firststepsnutrition.org
Infant Feeding	NCT	NCT Baby Café is a free drop-in, run by an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor, which supports parents to feed their baby	www.nct.org.uk/hounslow-baby-cafes
Introducing Solid Foods	NHS	Information, guidance and advice on introducing solid foods and weaning	www.nct.org.uk/hounslow-baby-cafes
Sleeping	NHS	Information on sleeping routine and helping your baby to get to sleep	www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/baby-basics/newborn-and-baby-sleeping-advice-for-parents/safe-sleep-advice-for-babies

Area	Website	Description	Link
Information and Guidance	BBC Tiny Happy People	BBC Tiny Happy People provides information, guidance and videos on baby development and fun activities to try	www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people
	Pampers	Pampers provide a range of information on all development stages	www.pampers.co.uk/toddler
	NHS Start for Life	Information on all aspects of parenting	www.nhs.uk/start-for-life
Development Activities	50 Things to do Before You're 5	A helpful app with 50 free development activities in Hounslow	https://hounslow.50thingstodo.org/app/os#!/welcome
	Family Services Directory	A list of activities for under 5s	fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/Family_Service_Directory/Things_to_do.aspx
Services and Support	Health Visiting	The Health Visiting Team can support and advise on your baby's development and other aspects	www.westlondon.nhs.uk/our-services/hounslow-community-healthcare/childrens-services/health-visiting
	Start for Life Offer	Covers all support and services from pregnancy until your baby is 2	www.hounslow.gov.uk/startforlife
	Children's Centres	Provides support and services to families with children under 5	fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/Family_Service_Directory/CC_New_CC_Home.aspx
	Family Hubs	Support for families and their children aged 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND)	www.hounslow.gov.uk/familyhubs
	North West London Children's Services Directory	North West London Children's Services Directory	https://shorturl.at/dgoS0
	Family Services Directory	Hounslow Family Services Directory	fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/Family_Service_Directory
	London Borough of Hounslow	Hounslow Council	www.hounslow.gov.uk



Baby Development Guide

How you can support your
baby's development



London Borough
of Hounslow

