

# You and your premature baby: 5 months



Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

[www.childrenshc.org](http://www.childrenshc.org)

## NICU Follow-Up Clinic

(612) 813-6722, Children's - Minneapolis

(651) 220-8063, Children's - St. Paul

## What to expect this month

Brace yourself! At 5 months, many babies start the first phase of an activity and growth spurt that will leave parents breathless. It may also raise some questions. Is my baby catching up fast enough? Will my baby's rough start have long-term effects? Will my baby remember the hospital? Am I spoiling my baby? Will my baby ever sleep all night?

Talk with your baby's health care provider about concerns you have. Feel free to call the NICU Follow-Up Clinic. We can answer questions, give you ideas to promote growth, and, if there is a delay, we can refer you to the appropriate services. (Remember: Until your child is 2 years old, use adjusted age as your benchmark. **Adjusted** age is based on original due date, not actual birth date.)

## Caring for your baby

### New foods

When your doctor recommends starting solid foods, you may find that your baby rejects new tastes or textures. Many preemies are sensitive to textured foods. Wait three or four days; then offer it again. As you add new foods, combining a new texture with a known and liked food can help with the transition. It is important to keep trying. Babies need practice chewing, moving food around in the mouth, and swallowing. They are learning to use muscles they will later use to talk.

## Home safety

Your baby is moving around and exploring with all the senses. Safety is a major concern now. Thoroughly "baby-proof" your home to prevent accidents. Be sure to:

- keep highchairs, playpens, and infant seats away from the stove, work counters, radiators, and furnaces.
- keep all electric cords out of reach.
- secure tables or lamps that can be pulled over.
- place gates at all stairways.

## This month with baby

Here's what 5-month-old babies might tell you . . . if they could!

### Movement

I like to:

- roll from my back to my stomach.
- touch, hold, turn, and shake objects; I also like to put them in my mouth and taste them.
- play with a rattle.
- reach for objects with one or both hands.
- sit alone for a few seconds with your hands ready to catch me.

I enjoy it when you:

- let me be barefoot so I can play with my toes.
- place me on my stomach so I can practice rolling and pushing myself up with my hands.

## **Playing**

I like to:

- smile or talk to you to catch your attention and get you to play.
- recognize myself in the mirror.
- play games with you, like peekaboo.
- make faces at you and copy the faces you make.

I enjoy it when you:

- play with me in the mirror and copy the faces I make.
- play peekaboo with me.

## **Thinking**

I like to:

- be awake and alert for almost two hours at a time.
- bang things to make noise.
- explore my world as well as myself.

I have fun when you:

- take me for walks so I can look at lots of new things.
- give me safe household objects to play with, such as plastic containers, measuring spoons, and washcloths.

## **Communicating**

I like to:

- make sounds with my voice and try to catch your attention.
- hear your voice. I often stop vocalizing or crying when you begin talking.

I enjoy it when you:

- sing songs to me and tell me nursery rhymes.
- tell me what you are doing.