

You and your premature baby: 7 months



Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

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NICU Follow-Up Clinic

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What to expect this month

Your baby loves you and wants to please you. Sensible rules and gentle discipline can help you guide and teach your baby. Your baby is learning to cooperate.

Babies are curious, so they often get into things that aren't safe. They don't mean to be bad. If your baby wants to explore something that isn't safe, don't simply say "no." Offer an alternative, another activity or item that is okay to play with. Limit your "no" to just a few key safety rules, such as touching electrical outlets and playing with chokable objects. If you say "no" only occasionally, your baby is more likely to respond and cooperate. A baby who hears the word "no" too often will soon tune it out and ignore it.

Use discipline thoughtfully. Ask yourself: "How can I help my baby learn and grow in this situation?"

Caring for your baby

Crawling

Crawling prepares babies to walk. It teaches balance and it exercises the muscles they will need for walking. Crawling involves bending the muscles, which can be hard for preemies. Stretching the muscles is easier for them, so they may try to stand or even walk, bypassing the crawling stage. Sometimes preemies need encouragement to crawl and play on their stomachs. You can help by getting down on the floor, too. Don't let your baby miss the important crawling stage.

Prevent choking

Choking is one of the most common accidents for children under one year. Babies explore the world with their mouths. Adults must be extra careful about any small object that could go into a baby's mouth. To help avoid choking on food, cut all food into small bite-sized pieces and never leave a baby alone when eating.

This month with baby

Here's what 7-month-old babies might tell you
. . .if they could!

Movement

I like to:

- sit with good balance for several minutes.
- hold a toy in each hand.
- move on my hands and knees.
- use my thumbs separately from my fingers to pick up my toys.

I enjoy it when you:

- give me a variety of objects to hold.
- let me try drinking from a cup.
- place me on the floor so I can practice getting on my hands and knees.
- put interesting things within my reach.

Playing

I like to:

- reach for and pat my reflection in the mirror.
- explore your body with my mouth and hands.

I enjoy it when you:

- read simple books to me, showing me the pictures.
- take me on walks to watch people.

Thinking

I like to:

- look for toys that are hidden.
- copy a simple act like clapping.
- try to feed myself.

I enjoy it when you:

- show me how to clap, wave bye-bye, blow a kiss, and brush my hair.
- sing and play familiar games with me.

Communication

I like to:

- babble.
- watch people when they talk.
- say several sounds in one breath.

I enjoy it when you:

- record our voices on a tape recorder, then let me listen.
- name objects in my world; for example, say "this is a ball" and "that is a tree."